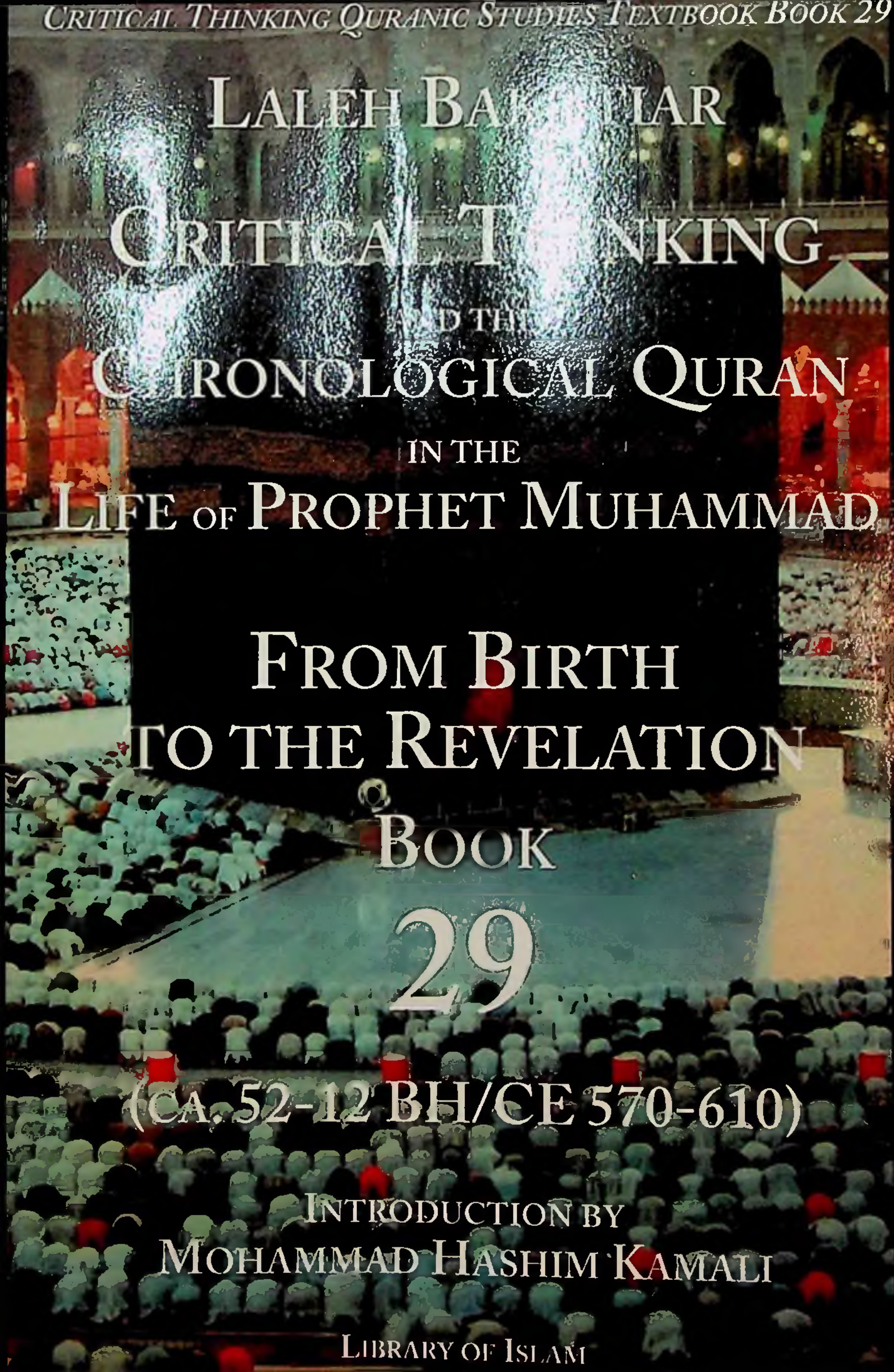

CRITICAL THINKING QURANIC STUDIES TEXTBOOK BOOK 29

LALEH BAKHTIAR

CRITICAL THINKING AND THE CHRONOLOGICAL QURAN IN THE LIFE OF PROPHET MUHAMMAD

FROM BIRTH TO THE REVELATION

BOOK 29

(CA. 52-12 BH/CE 570-610)

INTRODUCTION BY
MOHAMMAD HASHIM KAMALI

LIBRARY OF ISLAM

CRITICAL THINKING QURANIC STUDIES TEXTBOOK SERIES BOOK 29

LIFE OF PROPHET MUHAMMAD
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LALEH BAKHTIAR

LIBRARY OF ISLAM. (USA)

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PREFACE

EXPLANATION OF THE CRITICAL THINKING QURANIC STUDIES TEXTBOOK SERIES

There are thirty books in the series. *The Year 1* to *The Year 24* consist of one book for each year of the revelation. They each include the relevant chapter (*surah*) or chapters (when they are short) or sections (*ruku*) when there are multiple sections in a particular chapter. The chapters are numbered according to the chronological order of the Quranic chapters provided by al-Azhar University as the officially accepted order of revelation. The remaining books are: *Book 25*: *Adam, Cain and Abel, Enoch (Idris), Noah, Hud and the People of Aad; Saleh and the People of Thamud*; *Book 26: Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Lot, Jacob (Israel), Joseph and Job*; *Book 27: Moses, Aaron, Children of Jacob (Israel), Jethro (Shuayb), Joshua, Khidr* and *Samuel; Book 28: David, Solomon, Elijah (Ilyas), Elisha (Alyasa), Jonah (Younis), Ezekiel (Dhul Kifl), Ezra (Uzayr), Dhul Qarnayn (Cyrus the Great or Alexander the Great), Luqman, Zechariah, John the Baptist (Yahya), Mary and Jesus* are devoted to the Quranic stories of all other Prophets and Messengers in order of their dates and *Book 29: The Life of the Prophet from Birth to the Revelation. Book 30: Teacher's Manual*, has been prepared for the teacher's Lesson Plans.

SOURCES

The sources for the history include the works of Ibn Ishaq with notes by Ibn Hisham and Waqidi.

PREVIEW

Book 29 begins with the history of Arabia before the birth of the Muhammad in order to understand the political, economic and social setting of the revelation in which the Quran was revealed. It continues through the entire life of Muhammad until the age of forty when the revelation began.

LIFE OF PROPHET MUHAMMAD FROM BIRTH TO THE REVELATION

1. OVERVIEW OF ARABIA IN THE 6TH CENTURY CE

ARABIA

Arabia is a peninsula located next to the African continent. It is bounded on the southwest by the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden, on the south by the Arabian Sea, and on the northeast by the Gulf of Oman and the Persian Gulf. The total area is about 1,000,000 square miles. It is linked to Africa by the Sinai Peninsula and the Red Sea

Central Arabia, the land in which the Quran is revealed, consists of Najd (the high ground), Hijaz, between Najd and Tihamah, and Tihamah, on the eastern shores of the Red Sea and the border of the highlands. The peninsula contains what amounts to an ocean of soft sand. In the south there is a wilderness and desert which narrows in the center of the peninsula, forming a narrow passage which penetrates into the wilderness in the north. Between these two great wildernesses, which occupy almost two-thirds of the peninsula, is a relatively extensive sandy region which moves towards the Najd area. These oceans of sand are not quiet wildernesses but, rather, resemble stormy oceans. Currents of very calm streams cause such turmoil and chaos that the very life of every living creature is threatened.

The area of the Hijaz (literally, "the barrier") stretches from Aqaba to a point about 200 miles south of Makkah and includes Madinah (the City) which in the sixth century is called Yathrib. The Hijaz is the home of the descendants of Ishmael, the son of the Prophet Abraham and his wife Hagar, as well as that of Bedouin tribes, Jewish, Christian and idol worshippers.[1]

Traditional sources claim Makkah is founded by Hagar. Abraham takes her as his second wife with the permission of his first wife, Sarah, who, at that time, is unable to have children. Hagar becomes pregnant with Ishmael, whose name means 'God shall hear'. Sarah then tells Abraham that he will have to take her to another land. The Prophet Abraham travels forty camel days south of Canaan with Hagar to Makkah where he has been told by Gabriel that he is to rebuild the place of the House originally built by Adam.

POLITICAL SYSTEM

Ishmael marries a woman from the Jurhum tribe. This tribe had originally come from Yemen. They assume the position of authority in Makkah, but, over time, they begin to practice injustices towards the people. The people eventually rid themselves of the Jurhumites who return to Yemen. Before they leave Makkah, however, they bury the Zamzam well and treasures of offerings that pilgrims had left in the Kabah. Leadership passes to the Khuzaah tribe. Pilgrims continue to visit Makkah at least once in a lifetime for the greater pilgrimage and any time during the year for the shorter pilgrimage according to God's commands to Prophet Abraham and Ishmael.

When the Jurhum had ruled over Makkah, the Khuzaah had migrated to Yemen. Once the Jurhumites are expelled, the Khuzaah tribe then returns to Makkah and assumes the authority there. They dig wells for water not being concerned to find Zamzam.

FOREIGN POLICY

Makkah is an area of interest and concern to two great powers—Christian Byzantine and the Zoroastrian Persian empire, and of one lesser power, that of Abyssinia, because of the economic and trade opportunities Makkah offers.

The Christian Byzantines want luxury items from the East that move through Persia. The Zoroastrian Persian empire wants to continue its economic prosperity because of its central position as the crossroads of overland routes from China and India, and of sea routes from India and Sri Lanka (Ceylon) by way of the Persian Gulf. Products from the East move from Persia to Makkah and then to Byzantium and Europe. In this way, Makkah is also a crossroads. Both the Byzantines and the Persians try to control it and engage in many battles in their attempts to do so. Makkah is the crossroads for trade through western Arabia to Syria and the Red Sea.

Internally, within the Arabian peninsula, the pilgrimage is one of its largest sources of revenues. People come from all over the Arabian peninsula for the annual pilgrimage to the now house of idols which had formerly been the House of God and the People when Prophet Abraham and Prophet Ishmael had been commanded to rebuild it. As a religious center of idol-worship with great economic and spiritual potential, the Kabah becomes the envy of other religious leaders in the peninsula. They set out to destroy it.

ECONOMIC CENTER

Makkah then becomes the financial and commercial capital of Arabia. The leaders are from the Quraysh tribe. The secret of their prestige is the military power they can exert against their opponents. This military power develops through the tribal confederacies among whom there exists treaties of mutual defense.

The other rulers are willing to join with them because of the

Quraysh's financial and business enterprises sending caravans to Yemen and Syria. In doing this, they often hire nomads from the various confederacies. They also pay the tribes for safe conduct through their territory and for water and other supplies. Intermarriage among them is not uncommon.

RELIGION

CONTROL OF PASSIONS (HILM)

The Quraysh are the leaders of their community not only because of their business sense, but because underlying this is the practice of *hilm,* patient self-control, restraint, or their control of passion. This response to situations and people, however, comes from a perspective of the world that puts their tribe and blood relations as the highest authority. This belief results from their worshipping of idols and not the one God as taught by Abraham, Ishmael, and their followers.

In other words, the Quraysh leaders, for the most part, are people who practice the customs of their most immediate ancestors, and these customs include the worship of idols. A type of society develops which holds the tribe and blood-relations as the ultimate authority. Good and evil, positive and negative, become relative and can be summed up by "my fellow tribesman (or countryman), right or wrong" or "good because it is good for my tribe." The leaders of this society (or nation) are arrogant towards others because they are not "of their caliber." These are all signs of people who worship idols.

While Western historians have spoken highly of the pre-Quranic Arab nomads' sense of morality, what they fail to notice is that the morality they practice is one of the last remnants of Prophet Abraham's message, the direction and orientation of which they change so that it better suits their desire to worship idols.

Pre-Quranic Arabs, then, have a morality and very detailed rules of conduct by which they live and through which they judge any action—personal or tribal—as right or wrong. Their right and wrong, good and bad, however, lacks any kind of consistent theoretical basis, so that their rule of conduct becomes "X is good because the tribe with the most power says it is." Their maxim is, "Be loyal to your fellow-tribesmen, right or wrong."

As we shall see, the Quran refers to this code of conduct as one that leads to the worship of other than the One God.

Also, society is divided into classes and races. Depending upon their physical abilities, women are treated as property to be passed from person to person. Female children are often buried alive because they are considered a disgrace. That is, a man who has female children will constantly have to defend them and seek retribution for any harm caused to them as a result of tribal wars. In addition to this, there is the understanding that, since females cannot protect the honor of the tribe as males can, the fewer the better. If a few manage to survive, those who come from "noble families" are given in marriage to settle tribal rivalries. Those who come from families who can only "afford to worship gods made out of dates," because they are so poor, are taught to sing and dance and are given as prizes to clever poets.

IDOL WORSHIP

The descendants of Ishmael increase in number, requiring people to move to outlying regions away from the Makkah valley. When they leave, they take stones from the Kabah area with them. These stones become idols or gods and goddesses for them and they begin to perform rites in honor of them. At the last stage, they move away from monotheism towards idolatry. Pilgrims, then, bring their idols with them to Makkah and set them up around the Kabah.

The idolaters make claims for their idols. They say that the idols will mediate for them. The approach to God, which is direct in monotheism, becomes more and more distant because it is separated by things that are supposed to intercede between the believer and God. This increasing of distance between the believer and God gradually causes the people to forget about the Day of Judgment and that they will be held accountable for their deeds on earth. They think that as long as they believe in and pray to their stone gods, they will be saved. People forget that they themselves made the stones or wood into gods. They forget to worship the God Who created them and the stones and the wood.

Over the centuries many of the tactics Prophet Abraham uses are either forgotten or so transformed that they no longer serve the worship of the One God. Monotheistic ethics suffers the same fate. As ethics serves as the common denominator in relations between God and people and between the individual and other individuals, it is important for the believer to understand how the direction of ethics is transformed from serving as the basis of the relationship to the One God to serving as the basis for the worship of self and/or multiple gods.

The people to whom the Prophets in the Arabian peninsula spoke are mainly nomadic tribes, people whose life is based on stock-breeding. They move their herds and flocks between one area to another in search of water, from areas that in the summertime are waterless, sandy wastelands to areas in the wintertime that have vegetation for the animals.

As farming is not possible in Makkah due to the soil conditions, it becomes a commercial center. Some nomads move to the city and become sedentary while others continue their previous lifestyle. After Prophet Abraham and Prophet Ishmael rebuild the Kabah, the House of God and the People, Abraham returns to his wife, Sarah. Hagar is left with her baby, Ishmael. She exchanges Zamzam water for food from the caravans that would pass through Makkah beginning to make Makkah a commercial center. Once the Kabah is rebuilt, Makkah becomes a religious center, as well.

HUBAL

In addition, about 400 years before the birth of Muhammad, this place of worship of the One God is transformed into a house for the worship of idols. This is recorded to have happened when one of the Khuzaah leaders, who is a descendant of the king of the Hijaz (northwestern section of Arabia including the cities of Makkah and Madinah), visits Syria, which is then also a center of idol-worship. He asks the Syrians to give him one of their gods and they give him a god named Hubal. He returns to Makkah and places the idol "on the roof of the [Kabah]. This idol was one of the chief idols of the ruling Quraysh. The idol was made of red agate and shaped like a human, but with the right hand broken off and replaced with a golden hand. When the idol was moved inside the [Kabah], it had seven arrows in front of it which were used for divination."[2]

The people to whom Abraham and Ishmael had delivered the message of the belief and worship of the One God to attain salvation again turn to idolatry.

HISTORY

> They say that the beginning of stone worship among the sons of Ishmael is when Makkah becomes too small for them and they want more room in the country. Everyone who leaves the town takes with him a stone from the sacred area to do honor to it. Wherever they settle they set it up and walk round it as they go round the Kabah. This leads them to worship whatever stones that please them and those which make an impression on them.
>
> Thus as generations pass they forget their primitive faith and adopt another religion in place of that of Abraham and Ishmael. They worship idols and adopt the same errors as the peoples before them. Yet

they retain and hold fast practices going back to the time of Abraham, such as honoring the Kabah and going round it, the great and little pilgrimage and the standing on Arafat and Muzalifa, sacrificing the victims, and the pilgrim cry at the great and little pilgrimage, while introducing elements which have no place in the religion of Abraham. Thus, Kinana and Quraysh use the pilgrim cry: At Your service, O God, at Your service (*bayk Allahumma labayk*)! At Your service, You without an associate. You own him and what he owns. They acknowledge His unity in their cry and then include their idols with God, putting the ownership of them in God's hand.

BAHIRA, SAIBA, WASILA AND HAMI

They also worship female idols:

HISTORY

The Bahira is the she-camel of a mother-camel known as Saiba: the Saiba is the she-camel that gives birth to ten female camels without an intervening male colt. She is set free, is never ridden, her hair is not shorn, and only a guest is allowed to drink her milk. If she gives birth to a she-camel after that, its ear is split and it is allowed to go its way with its mother, not ridden, hair unshorn, and only a guest may drink her milk as in the case of her mother. Such is the Bahira, the she-camel of the Saiba.

The Wasila is a ewe which has ten twin ewes in successive births without a male lamb intervening. She is made a Wasila. They use the expression *wasalat*. Any ewes which she gives birth to after that belong to the males, except that if one of them dies, all share in eating it, both males and females.

The Hami is a stallion who is the sire of ten successive fillies without an intervening colt. His back is taboo and he is not ridden; his hair is not shorn and he is left to run among the camels to mount them. Beyond that no use is made of him.[3]

The idolatry that is the prevalent religion among the pre-Quranic Arab nomads has penetrated their lives in various ways. The Kabah becomes the house of their idols. Every tribe has an idol there. It is recorded to have had 360 idols. The inside walls are decorated with drawings of the Virgin Mary, Jesus, angels, and the story of Abraham. Lat, Manat, and Uzza, which the Quraysh consider to be the daughters of the gods, are given special shrines.

Al-Lat was a carved white rock, enclosed within a building covered with curtains, and with attendants serving it. Surrounding the building was a courtyard that the tribe of Thaqif living in Taif, as well as tribes in the surrounding area, venerated. They were considered exceptionally honored among Arab tribes, not however surpassing the Quraysh, for having it in their hometown. Needless to say, the Quraysh had the greater honor of having the Kabah, built by Abraham, in their city. It is thought that the name al-Lat was considered as being the feminine form of God's Arabic name, God (Allah).

Al-Uzza was a tree around which a building was built and with curtains raised. It was at Nakhlah, between Makkah and Taif. The Quraysh in particular used to venerate al-Uzza. After the Battle of Uhud, the Quraysh leader stood boasting: We have al-Uzza, but you have no Uzza, but the Messenger instructed his Companions to reply by saying: God is our protecting Master, but you have no master to protect you. It is thought that the name al-Uzza was the feminine form of God's name, al-Aziz, meaning the Almighty.

Manat was stationed at a place called al-Mushallal in Qadid, between Makkah and Madinah. The tribes of Khuzaah, al-Aws and al-Khazraj used to venerate it in their pre-Islamic days, and used to start their pilgrimage from there. The Quraysh also put the idol Hubal inside the Kabah.

Not only does every tribe have a special idol, but every family, in addition to worshipping the tribal god, worships a family god. These consist of everything from the stars to the moon to the sun to stone to wood to earth to dates and various statues. The Quraysh and the other Arabs attend to these idols in the Kabah and other centers. They hold ceremonies for them, circumambulate them, sacrifice for them. Every year, each tribe chooses a person, through great ceremony, to be the sacrifice of the gods. After they are sacrificed, they are buried near the place of sacrifice.

Just as they cover over the truth and the way of their natural disposition, just as they transform the House of God into the house of idol-worship, so they change the direction and orientation of the ethics and morality practiced by Prophet Abraham and the prophets who follow him, ethics which serve as a vital link to the belief in the One God.

In addition to the idol worshippers, there is another religious group that called itself the Hums. Ibn Ishaq says:

THE HUMS

History I do not know whether it is before or after the year of the elephant that Quraysh invent the idea of Hums and put it into practice.

> They say: We are the sons of Abraham, the people of the holy territory, the guardians of the temple and the citizens of Makkah. No other Arabs have rights like ours or a position like ours. The Arabs recognize none as they recognize us, so do not attach the same importance to the outside country as you do to the sanctuary, for if you do the Arabs will despise your taboo and will say: They have given the same importance to the outside land as to the sacred territory. So they give up the halt at Arafa and the departure from it, while they recognize that these are institutions of the pilgrimage and the religion of Abraham.[3]
>
> ### DISREGARD STAYING ARAFAT
>
> They consider that other Arabs should halt there and depart from the place. They say: We are the people of the sanctuary, so it is not fitting that we should go out from the sacred territory and honor other places as we, the Hums, honor that for the Hums are the people of the sanctuary. They then proceeded to deal in the same way with Arabs who were born within and without the sacred territory. Kinana and Khuzaah joined with them in this.[4]
>
> ### THEY INTRODUCE INNOVATIONS
>
> The Hums go on to introduce innovations for which they have no warrant. They think it wrong that they should eat cheese made of sour milk or clarify butter while they are in a state of taboo. They do not enter tents of camel-hair or seek shelter from the sun except in leather tents while they are in this state. They go further and refuse to allow those outside the sacred area to bring food in with them when they come on the great or little pilgrimage. Nor could they circumambulate the house except in the garments of the Hums. If they have no such garments they have to go round naked. If any man or woman felt scruples when they have no hums garments, then they could go round in their ordinary clothes but they have to throw them away afterwards so that neither they nor anyone else can make use of them.[5]

These clothes are called "the cast-off" and are to be destroyed. They also have the option to circumabulate the Kabah naked:

> The men at least went naked while the women laid aside all their clothes except a shift wide open back or front.

In another report, it is said that:

> Outsiders circumambulate the Kabah naked, both men and women. The ibn Amir ibn Sasaa and Akk are among those who did

> thus. When a woman went round naked she puts one hand behind her and the other in front.

They are called Hums because of the strictness of their religion.

> If one of them before and at the beginning of the Quranic message is in a state of taboo if he happens to be one of the house dwellers, i.e. living in houses or villages, he digs a hole at the back of his house and goes in and out by it and not enter by the door. The Hums say: Do not respect anything profane and do not go outside the sacred area during the pilgrimage. They cut short the rites of the pilgrimage that have been since the time of Abraham and Ishmael.[6]

IGNORANCE (JAHL) VS. CONTROL OF PASSIONS (HILM)

To the pre-Quranic Arab idol-worshipper, any change in the status quo is seen as undesirable because it interferes with the existing social order even if it is to continue to use a social practice, but for a different reason or with a different intent by reframing it.

The ethics of the Prophets is the ethics of *hilm*—the moral reasonableness of a religiously cultured monotheist. Being such means controlling one's passions, being patient, because these are qualities that God manifests through divine ethics and qualities that God asks a believer to manifest towards others. The ethics of the pre-Quranic idol-worshipper, who is steeped in tribal solidarity, is also to control one's passions, but it is done because it is considered to be part of tribal honor and not because of the ethics of the One God.

In other words, the response is the same—to control one's passions—but the response or 'effect' comes from a different intention or cause or perception of the universe. The perception of the Prophets is the One God; the perception of the idol-worshipper is tribal honor or national pride without considering God.

The Quran refers to Prophets Abraham, Isaac, and Jethro as being *halim*, forbearing, the noun form of *hilm*, meaning they are patient in adversity. *Hilm* means "the act of reining one's soul and holding back one's nature from the violent emotion of anger."[7] Or, "the state of the soul remaining tranquil so that anger cannot move it easily and its being undisturbed on the occurrence of any calamity, the state of calm tranquility notwithstanding attack of anger; being slow in requiting the wrongdoer."[8]

The basis for *hilm* is the belief in the One God, the Creator of the universe. It is to counsel to the Golden Rule (*ihsan*) in relations to others (i.e. following the Golden Rule) with an emphasis on justice and the preventing of wrongful violence while counseling the self to abstinence and the control of passions. It includes concepts like forbearance, patience, and liberating the self from being moved and stirred by the smallest provocation.

This is the direction and orientation of the true *halim*. The true *halim* develops confidence in reason because of the sense of *taqwa* or God-fearingness. Without reframing this quality, the moral reasonableness of a religiously cultured person may be that of a false belief known as zealotry.[9]

COMMENTARY°

> Zealotry [in the Quran] refers to that haughty spirit of a tribal man, the vehement insolence and pride so characteristic of the old pagan Arabs, the most stubborn resistance against all that showed the slightest signs of injuring their sense of honor and tending to destroy the traditional ways of life. It is to be remarked that this spirit of passionate resistance is here made to contrast sharply with the calmness of soul sent down from heaven upon the believers and their spiritual disposition to maintain control over themselves in critical situations, to conquer their own passions and to remain tranquil and forbearing in the name of religion.
>
> From the standpoint of Muhammad, the Age of Ignorance (*jahiliyyah*) is a bland, savage passion which characterizes those who 'do not know to distinguish between good and bad, who never ask pardon for the evil they have done, who are deaf to the good, dumb to the truth, and blind to heavenly guidance.'[9] In his view, it is this dark blind passion that has inspired endless blood-feuds, and causes countless miseries and disasters in the history of the pre-Quranic Arabs. It is the real fountainhead of all the barbarous practices of pagan days.[10]

Some pre-Quranic Arabs cultivate the *hilm* of Prophets Abraham and Ishmael for the right reason: in devotion to the One God. They become known, just as Prophet Abraham is known, as being a monotheist (*hanif*).

Other pre-Quranic Arabs cultivate the positive trait of *hilm* in order to use it as a means of power. It is what separates them from the ignorance of others. This then gives them a position of leadership because they can control their passions. However, they are controlling their passions in order to impress others and thereby use and exploit them.

618 Makkah: *And He is God in the heavens and in and on the earth.*
He knows your secret and what you openly publish

and He knows whatever you earn. (6:3)

People in a state of *jahl* (not controlling their passions and/or exhibiting an unyielding spirit of rivalry and arrogance) leads them to practicing infidelity to the One God (*kufr*).

618 Makkah: *So he perused and saw him amidst hellfire.* (37:55)
He said: By God, you were about to deal me destruction! (37:56)

COMMENTARY°

In this passage we see that the people of Lot, that is, the people of Sodom described as behaving in a characteristically ignorant way, "approaching" as they do "men with lust rather than women" which is an abominable sin according to the Quran message. Here it may suffice to note in this example too what is primarily understood under the word 'ignorance' is a man who goes to any extremes at the mercy of his own passions, and that not ignorance—while you can see—i.e. being fully aware of the fact that by acting in this way he is approaching an abominable sin. This example is of particular significance in our present context in that it shows clearly that ignorance . . . .implies the act of ignoring willfully the moral rule of forbearance (*hilm*).[11]

618 Makkah: *Surely, We know that what they say disheartens you.*
Truly, they deny you not. Rather the ones who are unjust
negate the signs of God. (6:33)
And certainly Messengers before you were denied
yet they endured patiently that they were denied
and they were afflicted with torment
until Our help approached them.
And no one who will change the Word of God.
And certainly there has drawn near to you
from tidings of the ones who were sent.(6:34)
If their turning aside had been troublesome to you,
then, if you were able, be looking for a hole in the earth
or a ladder to heaven so that you would bring them some sign.
If God willed, He would have gathered them to The Guidance.
Be you not among the ones who are ignorant. (6:35)

COMMENTARY°

The commentary of al-Baidawi explains this last sentence by paraphrasing it in this way: Be you not one of the ignorant by desiring what is naturally impossible to obtain and by getting impatient in those situations to which it is patience that is most befitting, for that is a

> characteristic act of those who are ignorant.
>
> It may be remarked that this is a passage in which God consoles and admonishes at the same time the Prophet who utterly distressed and disappointed at the stubborn turning away of his folk, is beginning to take a gloomy view of the future. God reminds him that there were many Prophets before him who suffered from the same sort of adverse fortune, that they however endured it patiently putting absolute confidence in the Providence of God. And He ends by commanding Muhammad to follow their example and not to get impatient in vain. It will be evident, then, that ignorance in this passage also means a man whose mind tends to be easily thrown into agitation by the operations of anger, grief, desperation or any other emotion.[12]

Ignorance is characterized by the blind, savage passion of those who cover over the natural means to distinguish between positive and negative, who never seek forgiveness for the evil they do, who turn away from the positive in disgust, dumb to the truth, their hearts blind to divine guidance. This ignorance develops into an arrogant sense of honor which is prevalent among the pre-Quranic Arab nomad. It is to take pride in human power, to have an over supply of self-confidence, and sense of self-sufficiency developing into a refusal to bow down before God and an arrogance towards one's inferiors.

Just as Prophets before him have emphasized, Prophet Muhammad is to say: Believe in the One and Only God and be saved from the ignorant superstitions into which you have fallen. The idol-worshippers have covered over the truth of their original belief in the after-life because they have become so attached to the world and worldly things. The Quran spells this out:

619 Makkah: *Had you considered he who took to himself
his own desire as his god
and whom God caused to go astray out of a knowledge,
sealed over his having the ability to hear
and his heart and laid a blindfold on his sight?
Who, then, will guide him after God?
Will you not, then, recollect?* (45:23)

MONOTHEISM

MONOTHEISM (TAWHID) VS. INGRATITUDE (KUFR)

The Quranic message is to replace love of this world with a sincerity that is derived from the awareness of the approach of the Day of Judgment. With this message, guarding against evil (*taqwa*), becomes a key word. People who hear the call to practice guarding against evil are shown the possibility for a genuine nobility of character and personality by not acting impulsively or squandering their wealth. The summons is to live with moral sincerity, being ever conscious of the Day of Judgment. This is the ethical principle upon which the monotheistic perception of the world is based.

MONOTHEISTS AMONG THE QURAYSH

History records exceptions to idolatry among the Quraysh. These exceptions are the people who are known as *hunafa* (sing., *hanif*) or monotheists. They are people who have continued to follow the religion of Prophet Abraham even though most of their society and tribe are idol-worshippers. They are people who also "control their passions" through developing the ethic of *hilm* but they do so because of an innate sense of "guarding against evil" (*taqwa*) and belief in the One God.

Abd al-Muttalib, the Quraysh leader from the Hashim clan, is recorded to have been among the *hanif*. He is known for his *hilm* which he cultivates within himself, because of his perspective on life, which includes the One God Who is *al-Halim*, forebearing, patient and long-suffering.

FOUR MEN WHO BROKE WITH IDOL WORSHIP

Shortly before the appearance of Muhammad, several men were not only seeking after the true faith (the religion of Abraham), but are in the mediate expection of the coming prophet. Of such inquirer among the Quraysh, Muslim biographies specify four.[13]

HISTORY

One day when the Quraysh assemble on a feast day to venerate and circumambulate the idol to which they offer sacrifices, this being a feast which they hold annually, four men draw apart secretly and agree to keep their counsel in the bonds of friendship. They are (i) Waraqa ibn Nawfal ibn Luayy; (ii) Ubayd Allah ibn Jahesh ibn Khuzayma, whose mother was Umayma bint Abd al-Muttalib; (iii) Uthman ibn al-Huwayrith ibn Qusayy; and (iv) Zayd ibn Amr ibn Kab ibn Luayy.

They are of the opinion that their people had corrupted the religion of their father Abraham, and that the Black Stone that they circumambulate is of no account. It can neither hear, nor see, nor hurt, nor help. They say: Find for yourselves a religion for by God you have none.

So they go their several ways in the lands, seeking the monotheists (*hunafa*), the religion of Abraham.[14]

WARAQA IBN NAWFAL IBN LUAYY

Waraqa becomes a Christian and studies its scriptures until he has thoroughly mastered them.

UBAYD ALLAH IBN JAHESH IBN KHUZAYMA

Ubayd Allah (by his mother a grandson of Abd al-Muttalib) embraces the Quranic message, emigrates with his family in the faith to Abyssinia, and there converts to Christianity.[15]

UTHMAN IBN AL-HUWAYRITH IBN QUSAYY

Uthman ibn al-Huwayrith goes to the Byzantine emperor and becomes a Christian. He is given high office there.

ZAYD IBN AMR IBN KAB IBN LUAYY

Zayd ibn Amr, a cousin of Umar, stays as he was. He accepts neither Judaism nor Christianity. He abandons the religion of his people and abstains from idols, animals that have died, blood, and things offered to idols. He forbids the killing of infant daughters, saying that he worships the God of Abraham, and he publicly rebukes his people for their practices. A woman says she saw him as a very old man leaning his back on the Kabah and saying: O Quraysh, By Him in whose hand is the soul of Zayd, not one of you follows the religion of Abraham but I.[16]

Then he says: O God, if I know how you wish to be worshipped I would so worship you, but I do not know. Then he prostrates himself on the palms of his hands. I am told by one of the family of Zayd ibn Amr ibn Nufayl that when Zayd faces the Kabah inside the mosque, he would say: Here I am! (*labbayka*) in truth, in worship and in service. I take refuge in what Abraham took refuge when he stands and faces the *qibla*. Now al-Khattab had harassed Zayd that he forced him to withdraw to the upper part of Makkah, and he stopped in the mountain of Hira facing the town. Al-Khattab gave instructions to the young irresponsible men of Quraysh that they should not let him enter Makkah and he was able to do so in secret only. When they got to know of that, they told al-Khattab and drove him out and harassed him because of their fear that he would show their religion in its true colors and that some would join him in seceding from it. He said, making much of its sanctity against those of his people who treated it as ordinary.

Then he went forth seeking the religion of Abraham, questioning monks and rabbis until he had traveled to al-Mausil and the whole of Mesopotamia. Then he goes through the whole of Syria until he comes to a monk in the high ground of Balqa. This man is well instructed in Christianity. He asks him about the monotheists, the religion of Abraham, and the monk replies: You are seeking a religion to which no one today can guide you, but the time of a Prophet who will come forth from your own country which you have just left has drawn near. He will be sent with the monotheists, the religion of Abraham, so stick to it, for he is about to be sent now and this is his time.

Now Zayd has sampled Judaism and Christianity and is not satisfied with either of them so at these words he went away at once making for Makkah, but when he was well inside the country of Lakhm he was attacked and killed before the rebuilding of the Kabah.[17]

2. GENEALOGY OF THE MESSENGER FROM THE PROPHETS OF MONOTHEISM[18]

MUHAMMAD'S PURE DESCENT FROM ADAM

Abu Muhammad Abdul-Malik ibn Hisham the Grammarian said: This is the book of the biography of the Prophet of God.

Muhammad was the son of Abd Allah, ibn Abd al-Muttalib (whose name was Shayba), ibn Hashim (whose name was Amr), ibn Abdu Manaf (whose name was al-Mughira), ibn Qusayy (whose name was Zayd), ibn Kilab, ibn Murra, ibn Kab, ibn Luayy, ibn Ghalib, ibn Fihr, ibn Malik, ibn al-Nadr, ibn Kinana, ibn Khuzayma, ibn Mudrika (whose name was Amir), ibn Ilyas, ibn Mudar, ibn Nizar, ibn Maadd, ibn Adnan, ibn Udd (or Udad), ibn Muqawwam, ibn Nahur, ibn Tayrah, ibn Ya'rub, ibn Yashjub, ibn Nabit, ibn Ishmael, son of Abraham, the friend of the Compassionate, ibn Tarih (who is Azar), ibn Nahur, ibn Sarugh, ibn Rau, ibn Falikh, ibn Aybar, ibn Shalikh, ibn Arfakh-shadh, ibn Sam, ibn Nuh, ibn Lamk, ibn Mattushalakh, ibn Akhnukh, who is the prophet Idris according to what they allege, but God knows best (he was the first of the sons of Adam to whom prophecy and writing with a pen were given), ibn Yard, ibn Mahlil, ibn Qaynan, ibn Yanish, ibn Shith, ibn Adam.

Ishmael son of Abraham begat twelve sons: Nabit the eldest, Qaydhar, Adhbul, Mabsha, Misma, Mashl, Dimma, Adhr, Tayma, Yajur, Nabish, Qayd-huma. Their mother was Rala d. Mudad ibn Amr al-Jurhuml. Jurhum was the son of Yaqtan ibn Aybar ibn Shalikh, and [Yaqtan was] Qahtan ibn Aybar ibn Shalikh. According to a report, Ishmael lived 130 years and when he died he was buried in the sacred precincts of the Kabah beside his mother Hagar.

Muhammad ibn Muslim ibn Ubaydullah ibn Shihab al-Zuhri told me that Abdul-Rahman ibn Abdullah ibn Kab ibn Malik al-Ansari, also called al-Sulami, told him that the Prophet of God said: When you conquer Egypt treat its people well, for they can claim our protection and kinship. I asked al-Zuhri what the Prophet meant by making them our kin and he replied: Hagar, the mother of Ishmael, was of their stock.

Ad ibn Aus ibn Iram ibn Sam ibn Nuh and Thamud and Jadis the two sons of Abir ibn Iram ibn Sam ibn Nuh, and Tasm and Imlaq and Umaym the sons of Lawidh ibn Sam ibn Nuh are all Arabs. Nabit ibn Ishmael begat Yashjub and the line runs: Yarub-Tayrah-Nahur-Muqawwam-Udad-Adnan.

From Adnan the tribes descended from Ishmael split off. Adnan had two sons, Maadd and Akk. Maadd had four sons: Nizar, Qudaa (he being his first born he was called Abu Qudaa), Qunus, and Iyad.

Qudaa went to the Yemen to Himyar ibn Saba whose name was Abd al-Shams; the reason why he was called Saba was that he was the first among the Arabs to take captives. He was the son of Yashjub ibn Yarub ibn Qahfan. Of Qunus ibn Maadd according to the genealogists of Maadd, none has survived. Al-Numan ibn al-Mundhir king of al-Hira belonged to their tribe. Al-Zuhri told me that this Numan belonged to the Qunus ibn Maadd.

Yaqub ibn Utba ibn al-Mughira ibn al-Akhnas told me that a shaykh of the Ansar of ibn Zurayq told him that Umar ibn al-Khattab, when he was given the sword of al-Numan ibn al-Mundhir, sent for Jubayr ibn Matim ibn Adiy ibn Naufal ibn Abdu Manaf ibn Qusayy (he being the best genealogist of the Qunaysh and indeed of all the Arabs and claimed to have been taught by Abu Bakr who was the greatest genealogist of the Arabs) and girded it on him. When he asked who al-Numan was, Jubayr replied that he was a survivor of the tribe of Qunus ibn Maadd. However, the rest of the Arabs assert that he belonged to the Lakhm of the Rabia ibn Nasr. Only God knows the truth.[19]

3. MUHAMMAD'S IMMEDIATE ANCESTORS

QUSAYY (400-480 CE)

When Hulayl from the Khuzaah tribe is leader in Makkah, he gives his daughter to a man named Qusayy, who is from the Quraysh tribe. Qusayy proves to be a powerful leader who defeats Hulayl's sons for control of Makkah and guardianship of the Kabah.

Qusayy then places his brothers in prominent positions in Makkah. These men include his brother, Zuhrah, his uncle Taym, the son of another uncle, Makhzum, and several other cousins. These are the first people known as the Quraysh. Some of them are called the Quraysh of the Hollow because they live near the Kabah. Other are called the Quraysh of the Outskirts as they live in the surrounding hills .

Acting as the supreme ruler, Qusayy then has dwellings built around the Kabah similar to his House of Assembly. The people of Makkah all pay Qusayy a tax on their herds, the money of which he uses to feed pilgrims who come who are too poor to provide sustenance for themselves.

Among Qusayy's four sons, the one who shows the greatest promise of leadership is named Abd al-Manaf ibn Qusayy. Qusayy himself, however, prefers his older son, Abd al-Dar. When Qusayy is dying, he appoints his son, Abd al-Dar ibn Qusayy, to be in charge of the pilgrims and the Kabah, and he gives him the House of Assembly.

HASHIM IBN ABD AL-MANAF (464-497 CE)

THE ALLIANCE OF THE PERFUMED ONES AND THE ALLIANCE OF THE CONFEDERATES

Abd al-Manaf accepts his father's decision, but among the grandchildren of Qusayy, the sons of Abd al-Manaf (namely Abd al-Shams, Hashim, al-Muttalib and Nawfal), Hashim, again shows qualities of leadership lacking in the sons of Abd al-Dar. A dispute arises when those who support Abd al-Manaf's son, Hashim, demand the rights be turned over to him, while others claim the rights for Abd al-Dar.

The women on Abd al-Manaf's side take a bowl of perfume to the Kabah. Hashim, his brothers, and all his supporters dip their hands in the perfume and swear an oath to one another, promising never to abandon each other. In sealing the agreement, they rub their hands over the Kabah. They become known as the Perfumed Ones. The supporters of Abd al-Dar swear an oath to each other and they become known as the Confederates. Agreement is then reached between the Perfumed Ones and the Confederates.

The Asad, Zuhrah, Taym and Harith Clans were with the Abd al-

Manaf Clan or the Perfumed Ones, while with Abd al-Dar were with the Makhzum, Sahm, Jumah and Adiyy Clans as the Confederates. Amir ibn Luayy and Muharib ibn Fihr remain neutral.

The two groups agree that violence is to be forbidden in the area of the Kabah, which extends several miles in diameter outside of Makkah. It is further agreed that the sons of Abd al-Manaf should have the right to collect the tax on any herds and from that, to provide food for the pilgrims. The sons of Abd al-Dar are to continue to hold the keys to the Kabah and the House of Assembly.

THE TIME OF THE ANNUAL PILGRIMAGE

When the time approaches for the annual pilgrimage, and the collection of the tax on their herds, Hashim stands up and says to the people: O men of Quraysh, you are neighbors of God, the people of His House. God's visitors come to you at this feast, people who are pilgrims to His House. They are the guests of God and no guests have more claim on your generosity than God's guests. If my own wealth were sufficient, I would not burden you with the tax.

It is Hashim who organizes two caravans: one from Makkah to Yemen and one from Makkah to Palestine and Syria through northwest Arabia. One of the first stops of the summer caravan is eleven camel days north of Makkah in a place called Yathrib, later known as Madinah. At the time of Hashim, an Arab tribe from southern Arabia is the leading tribe of Yathrib. This tribe rules over idol-worshipping and Jewish tribes. The Jewish tribes live in the area in prosperity while they remain faithful to Judaism.

The rulers of Yathrib are known as the Qaylah Clan. They are divided into two branches—the Aws and the Khazraj Clans. On one of the caravan journeys, Hashim stops in Yathrib (Madinah) and asks for the hand of the daughter of the leader of the Khazraj tribe. Her name is Salma bint Amr. She is from the Najjar tribe of Yathrib. She agrees to the marriage on condition that she remain in complete control of her own property. He agrees and they are married. She remains in Yathrib while he lives in Makkah. She bears a son whom she names Shayba whose name means 'the old one' or 'white-haired' because he has a white streak of hear in the midst of black hair. Hashim does not live long after the birth of Shayba, dying in Gaza, Palestine on one of his journeys.

Hashim's two full brothers are Abd al-Shams and al-Muttalib, and his half-brother is Nawfal. Abd al-Shams spends his time in trade with Yemen and later with Syria. Nawfal deals with the trade route to Iraq.

Al-Muttalib then takes over the leadership of Makkah and the pilgrimage. After a few years in this position, al-Muttalib begins looking among his family for someone who can assume the leadership after him. Everything points to Shayba, the son of his deceased brother.

When al-Muttalib goes to Yathrib (Madinah) to take his brother's son, Shayba, Shayba's mother refuses to let her son do.

HISTORY

al-Muttalib, Shayba's uncle, argues with Shayba's mother that his nephew is now old enough to travel and is as an exile away from his own tribe who are the people of the House, of great local reputation, holding much of the government in their hands. Therefore, it is better for the boy that he should be among his own family. al-Muttalib refuses to go without Shayba. It is popularly asserted that Shayba refuses to leave his mother without her consent. She ultimately gives-in. So his uncle takes him away to Makkah. Shayba rides behind al-Muttalib on his camel. When the people see them coming, they say: It's al-Muttalib's servant whom he has bought. That is how he got the name of Abd al-Muttalib. His uncle calls out: Rubbish! This is my nephew whom I have brought from Madinah.[20]

4. MUHAMMAD'S LIFE BEFORE THE REVELATION

THE LAND

MAKKAH

Within the great mountain range which skirts the Red Sea, and midway between the Yemen and the Syrian border, lies Makkah with and the Kabah. The traveler from the seashore approaches the sacred valley by an almost imperceptible rise of about fifty miles, chiefly through sandy plains and defiles hemmed in by low hills of gneiss and quartz rocks, which reach in some places the height of four or five hundred feet. Passing Makkah, and pursuing still an eastward course, he proceeds with the same gentle rise between hills of granite through the valley of Mina, and in five or six hours arrives at the mount of Arafat. Onwards the hills ascend to a great height, till about eighty miles from the sea the granite peaks of Jabal Qura crown the range, and Taif comes in sight thirty miles farther east. Between Jabal Qura and Taif, the country is fertile and lovely. Rivulets every here and there descend from the hills; the plains are clothed with verdure, and adorned by large shady trees.

FERTILITY OF TAIF

Taif is famous for its fruits. The grapes are large and of a delicious flavor; and there is no want of variety to tempt the appetite, for peaches, pomegranates, apples and almonds, figs, apricots and quinces, grow in abundance and perfection. Far different is it with the frowning hills and barren valleys for many a mile round Makkah.

STERILITY OF MAKKAH

Stunted brush wood and thorny acacias occasionally relieve the eye, and furnish a scanty repast to the camel; but the general features are rugged rocks without a trace of foliage, and sandy stony glens from which the peasant looks in vain for the grateful returns of tillage.

VALLEY OF MAKKAH

In its immediate vicinity the hills are formed of quartz and gneiss, but a little to the east, grey strata of granite appear, and within one or two miles of the city, lofty and rugged peaks shoot upwards in grand masses. The valley is about two miles in length. The general direction and slope are from north to south, but the upper or northern extremity on the way to Arafat bends eastward while at the lower end, where the three roads from the Yemen, Jeddah, and Syria meet, there is a still more decided curve to the west. Here the valley opens out to the breadth of half a mile. In this spacious amphitheater, shut in by rugged hills, lies the city with the Kabah in its center. Rocks rise precipitously all around, reaching on the eastern side a height of five hundred feet. It is here that the craggy defiles of Abu Qubays, the most lofty of the hills encircling the valley, overhand the quarter of the town in which Abd al-Muttalib and his family live.

CLIMATE

Though within the tropics, Makkah has not the advantage of tropical showers. The rainy season begins about December, but the clouds do not at any time discharge their precious freight continuously or with regularity. Sometimes the rain descends with excessive violence and inundates the little valley with floods from Arafat. Even in summer, rain is not infrequent. The seasons being thus uncertain the calamities of drought occasionally arise. The heart, especially in autumn, is oppressive. Surrounding ridges make the valley close and sultry. The sun, beating with violence on bare gravelly soil, reflects an intense and distressing glare. The native of Makkah, acclimated to the narrow vale, may regard with complacency its inhospitable atmosphere, but the traveler, even in winter, complains of stifling warmth and suffocating closeness.

LOVED BY THE MUSLIMS

Such is the spot, barren and unpromising, on which the Muslims look with fondest reverence as the cradle of their destiny and arena of the remote events which gave birth to their faith. Here Hagar alights with Ishmael, and in search of water hurries to and fro between the little hill of the Safa, a spur of Abu Qubays, and the eminence of the Marwa, an offshoot from the opposite range. Here the Jurhum Tribe establish themselves upon the failing fortunes of the ancestors of the Quraysh. From there they are expelled by the Quzaite invaders from the south. It is in this pent-up vale that Qusayy nourishs his ambitious plans, and, in the neighboring defiles of Mina, asserts them in a mortal struggle with his rivals. Here he establishes the Quraysh in their supremacy It is hard by the Kabah that his descendants, the children of Abd al-Dar and of Abd al-Manaf, are drawn up in battle array to fight for the sovereign prerogative. Here it is that Hashim exhibits his princely liberality and on this spot that Abd al-Muttalib toils with his solitary son till he discovers the ancient well of Zamzam. Thousands of such associations crowd upon the mind of the weary pilgrim, as the minarets of the Kabah rise before his longing eyes. In the long vista of ages reaching even to Adam, his imagination pictures multitudes of pious devotees in every age and from all quarters of the globe, flocking to the little valley, making their seven circuits of the Kabah, kissing the mysterious stone, and drinking of the sacred water.

ABD AL-MUTTALIB (SHAYBA) (497-578 CE): MUHAMMAD'S PATERNAL GRANDFATHER

The people prefer to keep calling Shayba, Abd al-Muttalib. He is to become the grandfather of the Messenger, Muhammad. The clan of Abd al-Muttalib's father is from the Hashim branch of the Abd al-Manaf Clan of the Quraysh. The Hashim Clan traces its lineage back to Prophets Ishmael and Abraham.

Abd al-Muttalib (Shayba) has four wives: Sumra bint Jandab, mother of Harith ibn Abd al-Muttalib; Lubna bint Hajira, mother of Abu Lahab Abd al-Uzza ibn Abd al-Muttalib; Fatimah bint Amr from the Makhzum tribe, mother of Abu Talib ibn Abd al-Muttalib, Zubayr ibn Abd al-Muttalib and Abd Allah ibn Abd al-Muttalib; Halah bint Wahib, mother of Hamza ibn Abd al-Muttalib, Muqum ibn Abd al-Muttalib, Hijli ibn Abd al-Muttalib, Safiyyah bint Abd al-Muttalib. His fifth wife is Natila bint Khabab Khuzriji, mother of Abbas ibn Abd al-Muttalib and Zarrar ibn Abd al-Muttalib.

After his uncle's death, Abd al-Muttalib (497-578 CE) takes over the responsibilities of the Kabah and enjoys sleeping in the semi-circular area beside it. One night he has a dream that he should find and dig out the well of Zamzam. He finds the well that his ancestors, the Jurhumites, had covered over.

DIGGING FOR ZAMZAM

HISTORY

While Abd al-Muttalib is sleeping in the sacred enclosure he has a vision in which he is ordered to dig Zamzam which is a depression between the two idols of the Quraysh, Isaf and Naila, at the slaughter-place of the Quraysh. It has been filled by the Jurhum when they left Makkah sometime before the birth of Muhammad. It is the well of Ishmael, the son of Abraham, where God gives him water when he is thirsty as a little child. His mother, Hagar, goes to seek water for him and can not find it, so she goes up to al-Safa praying to God and imploring aid for Ishmael. Then she goes to al-Marwa and does the same. God sends Gabriel, who hollow out a place in the earth with his heel where water appears. His mother hears the cries of wild beasts which terrify her on his account, and she comes hurrying towards Ishmael. She finds him scrabbling with his hand at the water beneath his cheek while he drinks. She make hims a small hole. When the exact spot has been indicated to Abd al-Muttalib and he known that it corresponded with the facts, he takes a pick-axe and goes with his son, al-Harith — for the had no other son at that time—and begins to dig.

When the top of the well appears he cries: *Allahu akbar*! God is Greater!

Thus the Quraysh know that he has found the well. They come to him and say: This is the well of our father Ishmael. We have a right to it, so give us a share in it.

He answers: I will not. I was specially told of it and not you, and I am the one to be given it.

They say: Do us justice, for we shall not leave you until we have a judicial decision in the matter.

He says: Appoint anyone you like to decide between us.

He agrees to accept a woman diviner of the Saad Hudhaym tribe, who lives in the uplands of Syria.

Abd al-Muttalib, accompanied by some of his relations and a representative from all the tribes of the Quraysh, rides away. They go on through desolate country between the Hijaz and Syria until Abd al-Muttalib's group runs out of water. They fear that they will die of thirst. They ask the Quraysh tribes to give them water, but they refuse on the ground that if they give them their water, they, too, would die of thirst. In his desperation Abd al-Muttalib consults his companions as to what should be done, but all they could do is to say that they would follow his instructions. He says: I think that every man should dig a hole for himself with the strength that he has left so that whenever a man dies, his companions can thrust him into the hole and bury him until the last man, for it is better that one man should lie unburied than a whole company.

They accept his advice and every man begins to dig a hole for himself. Then they sit down until they should die of thirst. After a time Abd al-Muttalib says to his companions: By God, to abandon ourselves to death in this way and not to scour the country in search of water is sheer incompetence. Perhaps God will give us water somewhere. To your saddles!

So they get their beasts ready while the Quraysh watch them. Abd al-Muttalib goes to his camel and mounts her. When she gets up from her knees, a flow of fresh water breaks out from beneath her feet.

Abd al-Muttalib and his companions, cry out: *Allahu akbar*! God is Greater! dismount and drink and fill their water-skins. Then they invite the Quraysh to come to the water which God has given them and to drink freely.

After they have done so and fill their water-skins they say: By God, the judgment has been given in your favor Abd al-Muttalib. We will never dispute your claim to Zamzam. He who has given you water in this wilderness is He who has given you Zamzam. Return in peace to your office of giving water to the pilgrims.

So they all go back without going to the diviner.[21]

ABRAHA'S ATTEMPTED ATTACK ON THE KABAH BH 53/570 CE

There has been years of strife in the Arabian peninsula between the Jews, Christians, and idol-worshippers. The Jews and Christians compete with one another for the conversion of the idol-worshippers to their respective faiths. This competition serves as the backdrop for the eventual attempt attack on the Kabah by the general of a Christian king of Abyssinia.

HISTORY

THE REIGN OF DHU NUWAS

The third son of Rabia ibn Nasr, Yusef Dhu Nuwas, converts to Judaism and rules as king of Yemen (517-525 CE). He is to be the last Himyarite king who rules over Yemen. All the tribes of Himyar join him.

There are some people in Najran who remain Christian, a virtuous and upright people who follow the Gospel. Their head is named Abd Allah ibn al-Thamir. The place where that religion takes root is in Najran, at that time the center of the Arabs' country. Its people, and, indeed, the rest of the Arabs, are idolaters. A Christian by the name of Faymiyun has settled there and converts the Najrani people to Christianity.

The people of Najran accept the religion of Abd Allah ibn al-Thamir according to the Gospel and the law which Jesus brought. Afterwards. they are overtaken by the misfortunes which befalls their co-religionists. Such is the origin of Christianity in Najran. But God knows best (what the facts are). Dhu Nuwas comes against them with his armies and invites them to accept Judaism, giving them the choice between that or death. They choose death. So he digs trenches for them, burns some in fire, slays some with the sword, and mutilates them until he has killed nearly twenty thousand of them. God revealed 85:4 in reference to Dhu Nuwas and his army.

It is said that among those put to death by Dhu Nuwas is their leader, Abd Allah ibn al-Thamir.[22]

THE MASSACRE

News of this massacre reaches the emperor of the eastern Roman empire who is a Christian and a strong supporter of his faith. One of the Christians from Najran, who had escaped the massacre, asks the help of the emperor to retaliate against Dhu Nuwas.

In spite of the emperor's support for Christian causes, he refuses to intervene in this case, but promises the Najrani that he will write to the king of Abyssinia, who is also a Christian, and ask him to take revenge. He writes a letter that he gives to the Najrani to take to Abyssinia. When the king of Abyssinia receives the letter, he sends the commander of his armed forces, Aryat, with 70,000 soldiers to Yemen.

The army sets up camp on the shores of Yemen. In a surprise attack, he defeats the army of Dhu Nuwas. The king of Abyssinia then appoints Aryat his governor in Yemen. Aryat, in gratitude to the king, builds a great church in Yemen. He writes to the king, tells him that this church will become famous as a center of pilgrimage for the Arab idol-worshippers, and that they will eventually forget the Kabah.

Contrary to Aryat's determination to establish Christianity in Arabia among the pre-Quranic nomadic idolaters, the people continue to go to Makkah every year for their annual pilgrimage. Aryat is replaced in Yemen by a new leader from Abyssinia whose name is Abraha.

Abraha then decides to attack the Kabah and destroy it in order to ensure that the Arab idol-worshippers will turn to the Christian church in Yemen for their annual pilgrimage. He leads his well-equipped army, including an elephant, towards Makkah. They defeat any opposition they encounter along the way. They finally stop at a town just outside Makkah. From there his troops begin to round up camels grazing in the area near Tihamah. Among these herds of camels are 200 that belong to Abd al-Muttalib, the leader in Makkah.

Abraha orders his second in command, Hanatah, to go to Makkah and tell the leader of the Quraysh that he plans to destroy the Kabah, but no one will be hurt as long as they do not offer any resistance. Hanatah does as he is commanded. He delivers the message to Abd al-Muttalib. In response, Abd al-Muttalib says: The Kabah is God's House which Prophet Abraham, Friend of God, rebuilt. God will do whatever is best for the people of the land.

Hanatah had not expected to hear this answer. As a Christian, he is familiar with Prophet Abraham. He wonders how a leader of the people who worship idols could have had such a notion. He asks Abd al-Muttalib to accompany him to his camp and to speak to Abraha himself.

They go back to the camp together. It is recorded that Abraha was impressed by Abd al-Muttalib who says to him: Among the camels your army took from Tihamah are 200 that belong to me. Order them to be returned to their owner.

Abraha, in surprise, answers: I never expected a person of your distinction to make such a request when I am about to destroy your center of pilgrimage.

Abd al-Muttalib, in a state of rightful 'moral reasonableness of a religiously cultured monotheist,' responds: I am the owner of the camels. The Kabah also has an Owner. Most assuredly He will prevent it from being destroyed.

Abraha, full of pride and arrogance, orders the release of Abd al-Muttalib's camels and then says to Abd al-Muttalib: I assure you that there is no power which can dissuade me from my resolve to destroy the Kabah.

Abd al-Muttalib then returns to Makkah and speaks to the Quraysh. He orders the people of Makkah to leave the city with their herds and to seek refuge and shelter in the surrounding mountains and hills. He accompanies them to the sheltered areas and, in the middle of the night, returns to the Kabah with several companions. He lays his hand upon the Kabah and with eyes filled with tears, calls out to the Creator: Oh Creator! You are our only refuge and hope. Almighty! Makkah is Your sacred territory. You have forbidden any aggression or fighting in its territory. Almighty God! The enemies of this House are Your enemies. Your servants are the enemy of those who commit aggression against Your House. Oh God! Prevent them from committing aggression against Your House. Creator! Let not their force destroy Your House!

In the morning, Abraha, full of rebelliousness against God's commands, moves towards Makkah. Suddenly flocks of birds appear from the direction of the Red Sea, each one carrying a stone in its beak and each of its claws. The air so fills with birds that the earth below them is darkened. As the birds drop the stones they are carrying upon the heads of Abraha's army of men and elephant, the men fall to the ground, bleeding from the wounds made by the falling stones. Abraha is also wounded, and he knows that this is God's wrath upon him as he sees his fallen army. He is obliged to call a retreat and return to Yemen. It is recorded that Abraha later dies in Yemen from the wounds he sustained. God has saved His House for which He had a greater plan.

Later the Quran is to reveal:

Have you not considered what your Lord
accomplished with the Companions of the Elephant? (105:1)
Makes He not their cunning leading to nothing? (105:2)
And He sent upon them flocks of birds, (105:3)
throwing at them rocks of baked clay. (105:4)
Then, made He them like
ones who are consumed by stalks of husked grain. (105:5)

The news of the event spreads quickly among the people, both the friends and foes of the Kabah alike. It has been such an amazing occurrence that the pre-Quranic Arabs reckoned their history, before and after, by the Year of the Elephant. It is 570 CE, the year of the birth of Muhammad.

FROM BIRTH TO THE AGE OF FIVE: BH 53-47/570-575 CE

ABD ALLAH IBN ABD AL-MUTTALIB (553-570 CE)

At the period of Abraha's retreat from Makkah, Abd al-Muttalib, now above 70 years or age (567 CE), enjoys rank and consideration as the foremost chief of Makkah. Some months previous to that event, he has taken his youngest son, Abd Allah,[23] then about twenty-four years of age, to the house of Wahb, a distant kinsman descended from Zuhrah, brother of the famous Qusayy. There he is married to Amina, the niece of Wahb, under whose guardianship she lives. At the same time, Abd al-Muttalib decides on a matrimonial alliance on his own account. He marries Halah, the cousin of Amina and daughter of Wahb. Of this late marriage, the famous Hamza is the first fruits.

As is customary in a marriage at the home of the bride, Abd Allah remains there with Amina for three days. Not long after, he leaves his wife with child, and sets out on with a caravan expedition to Gaza in the south of Syria.[24] On his way back he becomes ill at Madinah. He is left behind by the caravan with his father's maternal relatives. Abd al-Muttalib, on learning of Abd Allah's sickness, despatchs his son Harith to take care of him. Reaching Madinah, Harith finds that his brother has died about a month after the departure of the caravan. He returned with these tidings, and his father and siblings mourned for Abd Allah. He had been but twenty-five years of age, and Amina had not yet been delivered. He leaves behind him five camels fed on wild shrubs,[25] a flock of goats, and Umm Ayman, a slave-girl (called also Baraka), who tended the infant borne by his widow.

This little property, and the house in which he dwelt, are all the in heritance Muhammad receives from his father, but, little as it is, the simple habits of the Arab require no more. Instead of being evidence of poverty, the possession of a female slave is rather an indication of prosperity and comfort.

AMINA BINT WAHB

Amina is the daughter of Wahb bin Abd al-Manaf ibn Zuhrah ibn Kilab ibn Murrah. Her father is the grandson of Zuhrah, the brother of his great, great grandfather, Qusayy. Wahb is the eldest and noblest member and chief of the Zuhrah Clan until he dies and is succceded by his brother who raises Amina after her father's death.

MUHAMMAD IS BORN BH 53/570 CE

AMINA DELIVERED OF A SON, RABI AWWAL, 570 CE

Muhammad ibn Abd Allah is born in the month of Rabi Awwal (either the 12th or the 17th) in the Year of the Elephant or CE 570, two months after the death of his father, Abd Allah. No sooner is that infant born, than Amina sends to tell Abd al-Muttalib. The messenger carrying the good tidings reachs the chief as he sits in the sacred enclosure of the Kabah, in the midst of his sons and the principal men of his tribe. He stands, and those who were with him, and goes to visit Amina. Then he takes the young child in his arms and goes to the Kabah. As he stands beside it, he gives thanks to God. The child is called Muhammad.

The name is rare among the Arabs, but not unknown. It is derived from the root *hamada* and signifies The Praised. Another form is Ahmed, a translation of the Paraclete in Arabic versions of the New Testament, as it reflects the fact that the title under which the Prophet had been in their books predicted.

Muhammad is nursed in Makkah for a short time. After that, it is seen to be advantageous for the child to grow up in the desert with a wet nurse. This is the custom among the Arabs as it protects small children from epidemics that periodically threaten Makkah. It is also thought that the desert air and nomadic ways will strengthen a child physically and character-wise. Muhammad is given to Halima bint Abu Dhuayb, an impoverished Bedouin woman of the Saad Clan. The Saad Clan is a branch of the Hawazin Tribe. Every so often she takes the child to Makkah to see his mother, Amina, and grandfather, Abd al-Muttalib, and then she returns with him to her desert home.

The following is how Ibn Ishaq describes the woman who became

Muhammad's foster-mother and how he was raised by this Bedouin woman:

HISTORY

Abd al-Muttalib tries to find a foster-mother for him. Halima bint Abu Dhuayb of the Saad ibn Bakr Clan is asked to nurse him. Her father, Abu Dhuayb, was Abd Allah ibn al-Harith ibn Shijna ibn Jabir ibn Rizam ibn Nasira ibn Qusayya ibn Nasr ibn Sad ibn Bakr ibn Hawazin ibn Mansur ibn Ikrima ibn Khasafa ibn Qays ibn Aylan. Her husband and Muhammad's foster-father is al-Harith ibn Abd al-Uzza ibn Rifaa ibn Mallan ibn Nasira ibn Qusayya ibn Nasr ibn Sad ibn Bakr ibn Hawazin.

His foster-brother is Abd Allah ibn al-Harith. Unaysa and Hudhafa are his foster-sisters. The latter is called al-Shayma, her people not using her proper name. These are the children of Halima bint Abd Allah ibn al-Harith. It is reported that al-Shayma carried him in her arms to help her mother.

Halima, the Messenger's foster-mother used to say that she had gone forth from her country with her husband and little son whom she is nursing, among the women of her tribe in search of other babies to nurse. This is a year of famine when they are destitute. She is riding a she-donkey of hers with an old she-camel which does not yield a drop of milk. They cannot sleep the whole night because of the weeping of her hungry child, Abd Allah ibn al-Harith. She has no milk to give him, nor could their she-camel provide a morning drink of milk, but she is hoping for rain and relief. (Jahm ibn Abu Jahm, the client of al-Harith ibn Hatib al-Jumahi, on the authority of Abd Allah ibn Jafar ibn Abu Talib or from one who told him it as from him, informed Ibn Ishaq of this.)

She saya: I rode upon my donkey which has so kept back the other riders through its weakness and emaciation so that it is a nuisance to them. When we reach Makkah, we look out for foster children. The Messenger of God is offered to everyone of us. Each of us women refuse him when we are told he was an orphan, because we had hope to get payment from the child's father. We say: An orphan! and what will his mother and grandfather do? So we spurn him because of that. Every woman who came with me found a baby to nurse except me. When we decide to leave, I say to my husband: By God, I do not like the idea of returning with my friends without a baby to nurse. I will go and take that orphan.

He replies: Do as you please. Perhaps God will bless us on his account.

So I go and take him for the sole reason that I could not find anyone else. I take him back to my baggage. As soon as I put him in my bosom, my breasts overflowed with milk which he drinks until he is satisfied as is his foster-brother whom I had brought with me. Then they sleep whereas before this we could not sleep because they were so hungry. My husband gets up and goes to the old she-camel and lo, her udders are full. He milks it and he and I drink of her milk until we are completely satisfied, and we pass a happy night.

In the morning my husband says: Do you know, Halima, you have taken a blessed creature?

I say: By God, I hope so.

Then we set out and I ride my she-ass carrying him with me. My she-ass goes at such a pace that the other donkeys cannot keep up so that my companions say to me: Confound you! stop and wait for us. Isn't this the donkey on which you started?

Certainly it is, I say.

They reply: By God, something extraordinary has happened.

Then we come to our dwellings in the Saad country and I do not know a country more barren than that.

When he is with you, my flock yield milk in abundance. We milk them and drink while other people have not a drop, nor can they find anything in their animals' udders, so that our people say to their shepherds: Woe to you! Send your flock to graze where the daughter of Abu Dhuayb's shepherd goes.

Even so, their flocks came back hungry not yielding a drop of milk, while mine had milk in abundance. We cease not to recognize this bounty as coming from God for a period of two years, when I wean him. He is growing up as none of the other children grow. We took him back to his mother when he was five.

Thaur ibn Yazid from a learned person who I think was Khalid ibn Madan al Kalai told me that some of the Messenger's companions ask him to tell them about himself. He says: I am what Abraham, my father, prayed for and the good news of my brother Jesus. When my mother was carrying me, she had seen a light proceeding from her which showed her the castles of Syria. I had been suckled among the Saad ibn Bakr Clan.

The Messenger of God used to say to his companions: I am the most Arab of you all. I am of Quraysh, and I was suckled among the Saad ibn Bakr Clan. It is alleged by some, but God knows the truth, that when his foster-mother had brought him to Makkah he escaped her among the crowd while she was taking him to his people. She had sought him and could not find him, so she goes to Abd al-Muttalib and says: I brought Muhammad tonight and when I was in the upper part of Makkah. He has escaped from me and I don't know where he is.

So Abd al-Muttalib goes to the Kabah praying to God to restore

> him. They assert that Waraqa ibn Nawfal ibn Asad and another man of the Quraysh find him and bring him to Abd al-Muttalib saying: We have found this son of yours in the upper part of Makkah.
>
> Abd al-Muttalib takes him and puts him on his shoulder as he goes round the Kabah confiding him to God's protection and praying for him. Then he sends him to his mother Amina.[26]

It is probable that the constitution of Muhammad was rendered robust, and his character free and independent, by these five years among the Saad Clan. At any rate, his speech was thus formed upon one of the purest models of the beautiful language of the Peninsula. When eloquence began to form an important element of success, a pure language and standard dialect were advantages to him of essential moment.

FROM AGE FIVE TO TWELVE BH 47-40/575-582 CE

HIS MOTHER TAKES HIM TO MADINAH (YATHRIB)

When Muhammad is five years old, he is returned to the care of his mother, Amina bint Wahb, in Makkah. She takes him to Yathrib to visit her family of the Adiyy ibn al-Najjar Clan. So she departed with her slave-girl Umm Ayman, who tended the child. They rode upon two camels. Arriving in Madinah, she alighted at the house where her husband had died and was buried. The visit was on sufficient duration to imprint the scene and the society, notwithstanding his tender age, upon the memory of Muhammad. He used in later days to call to recollection things that happened on this occasion.

THE DEATH OF AMINA BINT WAHB (D. 577 CE)

After staying in Madinah about a month, Amina decides to return to Makkah, and sets out in the same manner as she had come. But when about half way, twenty-three miles from Madinah on the road to Makkah, they reach a spot called Abwaj, she falls ill and dies. She is buried there.[27] The little orphan is carried back to Makkah by Umm Ayman, who, although then quite a girl, is a faithful nurse to the child, and continues to be his constant attendant.

The early loss of his mother no doubt imparted to the youthful Muhammad something of that pensive and meditative character by which he was afterwards distinguished. In his seventh year he could appreciate the bereavement and feel the desolation of his orphan state. In the Quran he has alluded touchingly to the subject. While reassuring his heart of the divine favor, he recounts the mercies of the Almighty and amongst them the first is this: *Did he not find you an orphan and furnished you with a refuge?* (93:6)

GUARDIANSHIP AND DEATH OF ABD AL-MUTTALIB
(D. 578 CE)

The charge of the orphan is now undertaken by Abd al-Muttalib, who has by this time reached the age of eighty. The child is treated by him with singular fondness. A rug used to be spread under the Kabah and on it the aged chief reclines in shelter from the heat of the sun. Around the carpet, but at a respectful distance, his sons sit. The little Muhammad used to run up close to his grandfather and unceremoniously take possession of his rug. His sons, seeking to drive him off, Abd al-Muttalib would interpose saying: Let my little son alone. He would stroke him on the back and delight to listen to his childish prattle. The boy is still under the care of his nurse, but as often as possible he would leave her and run into the apartment of his grandfather even when his grandfather is alone or asleep.

Then Muhammad's grandfather becomes ill. Realizing his impending death, he places Muhammad under the guardianship of his son, Abu Talib, who is the full brother of Muhammad's father, Abd Allah, and a prominent chief of the Quraysh. Abu Talib had been made custodian of the Kabah following the death of his older brother, Zubayr.

HISTORY

Muhammad ibn Said ibn al-Musayyib told me that when Abd al-Muttalib knew that death was at hand he summoned his six daughters: Safiya, Barra, Atika, Umm Hakim al-Bayda, Umayma, and Arwa, and said to them: Compose elegies over me so that I may hear what you are going to say before I die.

Safiya bint Abd al-Muttalib said in mourning her father:

I could not sleep for the voices of the keening women,
Bewailing a man on the crown of life's road,
It caused the tears to flow
Down my cheeks like falling pearls
For a noble man, no wretched weakling,
Whose virtue was plain to all.
The generous Shayba, full of merits,
Thy good father inheritor of all virtue,
Truthful at home, no weakling,
Standing firm and self-reliant.

Powerful, fear-inspiring, massive,
Praised and obeyed by his people,
Of lofty lineage, smiling, virtuous,
A very rain when camels had no milk.
Noble was his grandfather without spot of shame,
Surpassing all men, bond or free,
Exceeding mild, of noble stock,
Who were generous, strong as lions,
Could men be immortal through ancient glory,
(Alas immortality is unobtainable!)
He would make his last night endure forever
Through his surpassing glory and long descent.

His daughter Barra said:

Be generous, O eyes, with your pearly tears,
For the generous nature who never repelled a beggar.
Of glorious race, successful in undertaking,
Of handsome face, of great nobility.
Shayba, the laudable, the noble,
The glorious, the mighty, the renowned,
The clement, decisive in misfortunes,
Full of generosity, lavish in gifts,
Excelling his people in glory,
A light shining like the moon in its splendor.
Death came to him and spared him not,
Change and fortune and fate overtook him.

His daughter Atika said:

Be generous, O eyes, and not miserly
With your tears when others sleep,
Weep copiously, O eyes, with your tears,
While you beat your faces in weeping.
Weep, O eyes, long and freely
For one, no dotard weakling,
The strong, generous in time of need,
Noble in purpose, faithful to his word.
Shayba the laudable, successful in undertaking,
The reliable and the steady,
A sharp sword in war
Destroying his enemies in battle,
Easy natured, open handed,
Loyal, stout, pure, good.

His house proudly rooted in high honor
Mounted to glory unobtainable by others.

His daughter Umm Hakim al-Bayda said:

Weep, O eye, generously, hide not thy tears,
Weep for the liberal and generous one,
Fie upon thee O eye, help me
With fast falling tears!
Weep for the best man who ever rode a beast,
Thy good father, a fountain of sweet water.
Shayba the generous, the virtuous,
Liberal in nature, praised for his gifts,
Lavish to his family, handsome,
Welcome as rain in years of drought.
A lion when the spears engage,
His womenfolk look on him proudly.
Chief of Kinana on whom their hopes rest,
When evil days brought calamity,
Their refuge when war broke out,
In trouble and dire distress.
Weep for him, refrain not from grief,
Make women weep for him as long as you live.

His daughter Umayma said:

Alas, has the shepherd of his people, the generous one, perished,
Who gave the pilgrims their water, the defender of our fame,
Who used to gather the wandering guest into his tents,
When the heavens begrudged their rain.
You have the noblest sons a man could have
And have never ceased to grow in fame, O Shayba!
Abu al-Harith, the bountiful, has left his place,
Go not far for every living thing must go far.
I shall weep for him and suffer as long as I live.
His memory deserves that I suffer.
May the Lord of men water thy grave with rain!
I shall weep for him though he lies in the grave'.
He was the pride of all his people,
And was praised wherever praise was due.

His daughter Arwa said:

My eye wept and well it did

For the generous modest father,
The pleasant natured man of Mecca's vale,
Noble in mind, lofty in aim,
The bountiful Shayba full of virtues,
Thy good father who has no peer,
Long armed, elegant, tall,
Twas as though his forehead shone with light,
Lean waisted, handsome, full of virtues,
Glory, rank, and dignity were his,
Resenting wrong, smiling, able,
His ancestral fame could not be hid,
The refuge of Malik, the spring of Fihr,
When judgment was sought he spoke the last word.
He was a hero, generous, liberal,
And bold when blood was to be shed,
When armed men were afraid of death
So that the hearts of most of them were as air, l
Forward he went with gleaming sword,
The cynosure of all eyes.

> Muhammad ibn Said ibn al-Musayyib told me that Abd al-Muttalib made a sign to the effect that he was satisfied with the elegies, for he could not speak just before he died.[28]

The guardianship of Abd al-Muttalib lasts but two years. He dies eight years after the attack of Abraha.[29] The orphan child bitterly feels the loss of his indulgent grandfather. As he follows the bier he is seen to weep, and when he grows up, he retains a distinct remembrance of his death. The heart of Muhammad in his tender years is thus again rudely wounded, and the fresh bereavement is rendered more poignant by the dependent position in which it left him. The nobility of his grandfather's descent, the deference paid to him throughout the vale of Makkah, and his splendid hospitality towards the pilgrims, in furnishing them with food and drink, are witnessed with satisfaction by the thoughtful child. These things no doubt leave behind them a proud remembrance, and form the seed perhaps of many a thought of helping others.

The death of Abd al-Muttalib leaves the children of Hashim without any powerful head while it enables the other branch, descended from Umayah, to gain ascendancy. Of the latter family the chief at this time is Harb, who held the leadership in war, and is followed by a numerous and powerful body of relations.

FROM AGE EIGHT TO TWENTY-FIVE
BH 44-22/578-595 CE

Abu Talib ibn Abd al-Muttalib (539-613 CE)

Abu Talib ibn Abd al-Muttalib (549–619 CE) had married Fatima bint Asad. Fatima bint Asad ibn Hashim becomes Muhammad's second mother as he lives for seventeen years with she and Abu Talib. Fatima is the daughter of Asad ibn Hashim and Fatima bint Haram ibn Rawaha who is the daughter of Khadija's maternal grandfather. Muhammad now grows up in the house of his full uncle, Abu Talib, and his wife, Fatima.

Abu Talib and Fatima bint Asad have three sons: Aqil ibn Abu Talib, born in 590 when Muhammad is twenty; Jafar ibn Abu Talib, born between 590 and 600 CE and Ali ibn Abu Talib, born to Abu Talib and Fatima bint Asad after 595 CE. Abu Talib and Fatima bint Asad also have two daughters: Fakhita bint Abu Talib (Umm Hani) and Jumanah bint Abu Talib.

The Sons of Abd al-Muttalib

Of Abd al-Muttalib's sons, Harith, the eldest, is now dead. He is survived by his brothers, Zubayr and Abu Talib (both by the same mother as Abd Allah); Abu Lahab, Abbas, and Hamza (from different mothers). The last two are still very young. Zubayr is the oldest, and to him Abd al- Muttalib bequeathes his offices. Zubayr, again, leaves them to Abu Talib, who, finding himself too poor to discharge the expensive and onerous task of providing for the pilgrims, waives the honor in favor of his younger brother, Abbas. As the family of Hashim had fallen from its high estate only Abbas is able to retain the giving of drink, while the furnishing of food passed into the hands of another branch. Abbas is wealthy, and his influential post, involving charge of the well Zamzam is retained by him until the beginning of the revelation, and then confirmed to his family by the Prophet.

Abu Talib and Abbas

Abu Talib possesses many noble qualities, and wins greater respect. It was thus that in the oscillations of government, the prestige of the house of Hashim has begun to wane, and nearly disappear while the rival Umayyad branch is rising to importance. This phase of the political state of Makkah had begun with the death of Abd al-Muttalib, and continues until the conquest of the city by Muhammad himself.

Abu Talib Becomes Guardian of His Orphan Nephew

To Abu Talib, the dying Abd al-Muttalib consigns the guardianship of his orphan grandchild. Abu Talib faithfully and kindly discharges the trust. His fondness for the boy equals that of Abd al-Muttalib. He makes him sleep by his bed, eat by his side, and go with him wherever he walks. And this tender treatment continues for seventeen years.

FIRST JOURNEY TO SYRIA AND THE STORY OF BAHIRA THE MONK (582 CE)

It is during this period that Abu Talib, accompanied by Muhammad, undertakes a commercial journey to Syria. He intends to leave the lad behind, for now twelve years of age he is able to take care of himself. But when the caravan is ready to depart, and Abu Talib about to mount, the child, overcome by the prospect of so long a separation, clings to his protector. Abu Talib is moved, and carries him along with the party.[30] The expedition extended to Busra, perhaps farther.

HISTORY

[In 582 CE] When the caravan reachs Busra in Syria, there is a monk there in his cell by the name of Bahira, who is well versed in the knowledge of Christians. A monk has always occupied that cell. There he gains his knowledge from a book that is in the cell handed on from generation to generation.

Their caravan has often passed by him in the past. He had never spoken to them or taken any notice of them until this year. When they stop near his cell he prepares a great feast for them because of something he had seen while in his cell. While the monk had been in his cell, when the caravan approachs, he sees Muhammad in the caravan with a cloud overshadowing him among the people.

Then they stop in the shadow of a tree near the monk. He looks at the cloud when it overshadowed the tree, and its branches are bending and drooping over Muhammad until he is in the shadow beneath it.

When Bahira sees that, he comes out of his cell and sends word to them: I have prepared food for you, O men of Quraysh, and I should like you all to come both great and small, bond and free.

One of them says to him: By God, Bahira! Something extraordinary has happened today. We have often passed by you and you never treated us so. What has happened to you today?

He answers: You are right in what you say, but you are guests. I wish to honor you and give you food so that you may eat.

So they gathered together with him, leaving Muhammad behind with the baggage under the tree, on account of his extreme youth. When Bahira looks at the people he does not see the mark that he knows and finds in his books. He says: Has someone been left remain

> behind?
>
> They tell him that no one who should come has remained behind except a boy who is the youngest of them and has stayed with their baggage. Thereupon he tells them to invite him to come to the meal with them.
>
> One of the men of Quraysh says: By al-Lat and al-Uzza, we are to blame for leaving behind the son of Abd Allah ibn Abd al-Muttalib.
>
> Then he gets up and embraces him and makes him sit with the people. When Bahira sees him, he stares at him closely, looking at his body and finding traces of his description in the Christian books. When the people have finished eating and gone away, Bahira gets up and says to him: Boy, I ask you by al-Lat and al-Uzza to answer my question.
>
> Now Bahira says this only because he has heard his people swearing by these gods. Muhammad says to him: Do not ask me by al-Lat and al-Uzza, for by God nothing is more hateful to me than these two.
>
> Bahira answers: Then by God, tell me what I ask.
>
> He replied: Ask me what you like.
>
> So he began to ask him about what happened in his waking and in his sleep, his habits, and his affairs generally. What Muhammad tells him coincided with what Bahira knows of his description.
>
> Then he looks at his back and sees the seal of prophethood between his shoulders in the very place described in his book.
>
> When he has finished, he goes to his uncle, Abu Talib and asks him what relation this boy is to him. When he tells him he is his son, he says that he is not, for it could not be that the father of this boy is alive.
>
> He is my nephew, he says. When he asks what had become of his father, he tells him that he had died before the child had been born.
>
> You have spoke the truth, says Bahira. Take your nephew back to his country and guard him carefully against the Jews, for by God! if they see him and know about him what I know, they will do him evil. A great future lies before this nephew of yours, so take him home quickly.[31]

The journey lasts for several months, and affords to the youthful Muhammad opportunities of observation which are not lost upon him. He passs near to Petra, Jerash, Amman and other remains of former mercantile grandeur. The sight must have deeply imprinted upon his reflective mind the instability of earthly greatness. The wild story of the valley of Hijr, with its lonely deserted habitations hewn out of the rock, and the tale of divine vengeance descending on the cities of the plain over which now rolled the waves of the Dead Sea, would excite apprehension and awe while such strange histories, rendered more startling and tragical by Jewish tradition and local legend, would win and charm the childish heart ever yearning after the marvelous. On this journey too, he passes through several Jewish settlements, and came in contact with the Christians of Syria.

MUHAMMAD THE SHEPHERD

Muhammad helps his uncle, Abu Talib, out by working with the herds as a shepherd. He takes the herds of his relatives and other people of Makkah to the surrounding areas for which he receives a wage. He gives his earnings to his uncle to help with expenses.

This livelihood gives him time to reflect and contemplate. He matures into a person who is generous, good-tempered, magnanimous, kind, helpful, tolerant, truthful, and trustworthy. He is to say in later years: There is no Prophet but has shepherded a flock. When they ask: You, too, Messenger of God? He said: Yes.[32]

MUHAMMAD LEARNS ARCHERY

By the time Muhammad is twenty, Abu Talib has made sure that he and his uncles, Hamza and Abbas, receive some training in the use of the bow and arrow. Muhammad proves to be a good archer, as Prophets Abraham and Ishmael had been. He is particularly good at it because of his keen eyesight. It is said he could count twelve of the stars of the Pleiades.

THE SACRILEGIOUS WAR 580-590 CE

The peaceful life in Makkah is shattered when fighting begins in what is known as the Fijar or Sacrilegious War when Muhammad is ten years old, because it breaks out during one of the months in which fighting is forbidden at the annual Ukaz fair.

UKAZ FAIR HELD ANNUALLY

In the sacred month preceding the annual pilgrimage (Dhul Qida), a fair is held at Ukaz where, within three days' journey east of Makkah, the shady palm and cool fountain offered a grateful resting-place to the merchant and traveler after their toilsome journey.[33]

CONTESTS OF CHIVALRY AND POETRY

Goods are bartered, vain glorious contests (those characteristic exhibitions of Bedouin chivalry) are held, and verses recited by bards of the various tribes. The successful poems produced at this national gathering are treated with distinguished honor. They are transcribed in illuminated characters, and thus styled Golden or they are attached to the Kabah and honored with the title Suspended. Seven Suspended Poems still survive from a period before Muhammad, a wondrous specimen of eloquence. The beauty of their language and wild richness of their imagery are acknowledged by many, but the subject is limited, and the beaten track seldom deviated from. The charms of his mistress, the envied spot marked still fresh traces of her encampment, the solitude of her deserted haunts, his own generosity and prowess, the unrivalled glory of his tribe, the noble qualities of his came, these are the themes which, with little variation of treatment, and with no contrivance whatever of plot or story, occupied the Arab muse and some of them only added fuel to the besetting vices of the people, vainglory, envy, vindictiveness, and pride.

ORIGINS OF THE SACRILEGIOUS WAR

At the fair of Ukaz, a rivalrous spirit had been about this period engendered between the Quraysh and the Hawazin Tribe, a large tribe of kindred descent, which dwelt in the country between Makkah and Tai An arrogant poet, vaunting the superiority of his tribe, is struck by a indignant Hawazinite. A woman of Hawazin descent rudely treated b some Qurayshite youths. An importunate creditor is solently repulsed. On each occasion the sword is unsheathed, blood flows, and the conflict would have become general unless the leaders interfere to calm the excited people. Such is the origin of the Sacrilegious War.

PRECAUTIONS FOR PEACE

These incidents suggest the expediency of requiring all who frequented the fair to surrender, while it lasted, their arms, and to deposit them with Abd Allah ibn Judan, a chief of Makkah. By this precaution peace is preserved for several years, when a wanton murder supplies more serious cause of offense.

HOSTILITIES PRECIPITATED BY A MURDER

The leader of Hira has despatched to the fair a caravan richly laden with perfumes and musk. It proceeds under the escort of an Hawazin chieftain. Another chief, friend of Quraysh, jealous at being supplanted in charge of the convoy, watches his opportunity, and, falling upon the caravan, kills its leader, and flees with the booty. On his flight he meets a man of the Quraysh whom he charges to proceed with expedition to the fair then being held at Ukaz, and communicate the intelligence to his confederate Harb[34] and other Qurayshite chiefs. The message is promptly conveyed, and Ibn Judan, thus privately informed of the murder, forthwith gives back to all their arms, and, feigning urgent business at Makkah, departs with his whole tribe. The news of the murder begins rapidly to spread at Ukaz, and as the sun goes down it reaches the ears of the Hawazin chief, who at once, perceiving the cause of the precipitate departure of the Quraysh, rallies his people and proceeds in hot pursuit. The Quraysh have already entered the sacred limits, and so their enemy contents themselves with challenging them to a rencounter at the same period in the following year.

A TRUCE AFTER FOUR YEARS FIGHTING

The challenge is accepted, and both parties prepare for the struggle. Several battles are fought with various success, and hostilities, more or less formal, prolong for four years, when a truce is called. The dead are counted, and as twenty have been killed of the Hawazin more than of Quraysh, the latter consents to pay the price of their blood, and for this purpose delivers hostages. One of these was Abu Sufyan, the famous antagonist in after days of Muhammad. In some of these conflicts, the whole of the Quraysh and their allies are engaged. Each tribe is commanded by a chief of its own and Ibn Judan guides the general movements.

UMAYYIDS AND HASHEMITES BOTH ENGAGED IN THE STRUGGLE

The descendants of Abd Shams are headed by Harb, son of Umaya, and took a distinguished part in the warfare. The children of Hashim are present also, under command of Zubayr, eldest surviving son of Abd al-Muttalib, but they occupy a less prominent position.

PART TAKEN BY MUHAMMAD

In one of the battles Muhammad attends upon his uncles, but, though now near twenty years of age, he has not acquired the love of arms. According to some, his efforts are confined to gathering up the arrows of the enemy as they fall, and handing them to his uncles. Others assign him a somewhat more active share, but the sentence in which even this is preserved does not imply much enthusiasm in the warfare. I remember, the Prophet, he used to say, being present with my uncles in the Sacrilegious War. I discharged arrows at the enemy, and I do not regret it.[35]

A few weeks after the end of the Fijar War, a merchant from Yemen sells some valuable goods to a leader of the Sahm Clan. The man who took the goods then refused to pay the agreed-upon price. The member of the Sahm Clan knows that the merchant is a stranger in Makkah with no clan to support him. The merchant then goes to the area of the Kabah and pleads his case before the Quraysh.

REVIVAL OF THE PACT OF CHIVALRY (FUTUWWAH): HILF AL-FUZUL 590 CE

There was no one to exercise an authority such as had been enjoyed by Qusayy and Hashim, or even by Abd al-Muttalib. When any of the separate tribes neglect to punish its members for oppression and wrongdoing, no chief at Makkah is strong enough to stand up as champion of the injured. Right is not enforced. Wrong remains unpunished. Certain glaring acts of tyranny suggest to the principal Qurayshite families the expedience of binding themselves by an oath to secure justice to the helpless.[36]

The honor of originating the movement is ascribed to Zubayr, eldest surviving son of Abd al-Muttalib. The descendants of the two groups the Alliance of the Perfumed Ones and the Alliance of the Confederate still hold to their ancestors' agreement. The clan of the man who refuse to pay for the goods is from the Confederates.

The Perfumed Ones gather under the leadership of the leader of the Taym clan, Abd Allah ibn Judan, who is one of the wealthiest men in Makkah. Abd Allah ibn Judan offers his home as a meeting place for all those who love justice. Representatives of the Hashim, al-Muttalib, Zuhrah, Asad, and Taym clans all attend. They are joined by one of the former Confederates, the Adiyy tribe. The clans of Abd al- Shams and Nawfal, which had been among the original Perfumed Ones, do not attend the meeting.

The group decides that a way of justice must be found to protect the weak. They form a chivalric order known as Hilf al-Fudul. They go to the Kabah and pour water over the Black Stone which they collect in a bowl. Each man then drinks of this water. They raise their right hands above their heads and vow to stand together against any oppression that may take place in Makkah until justice is done, whether the oppressed person is a member of the Quraysh or otherwise. They then make the Sahm clansman pay for the goods he had received. None of the Confederates oppose their decision, even though they had not joined in the pact.

Among the people who form this chivalric order of the *futuwwah*

> are Zubayr, who brings his nephew Muhammad, with him. Also present is Abu Quhafah of Taym, who brings with him his son, Abu Bakr, who is a few years younger than Muhammad. In later years, Muhammad is to say: I was present in the house of Abd Allah ibn Judan at so excellent a pact that I would not exchange my part in it for a herd of red camels. If now, with the Quranic message, I were summoned unto it, I would gladly respond.[37]

Muhammad's participation in this Pact is seen as a stand for the protection of human rights in a tribal society fraught with ignorance and backwardness. It is a Pact to protect the oppressed and homeless. Later it is to be used to protect the oppressed in Makkah against the tyrants and oppressors.

FROM AGE TWENTY-FIVE TO FORTY
BH 27-12/595-610 CE

ABU TALIB SUGGESTS MUHAMMAD TAKE A CARAVAN TO SYRIA

Abu Talib is endeavoring to find a suitable profession for his nephew to help him get started in life. He suggests that Muhammad lead a caravan to Syria. One of the well-known caravan owners had been that of a woman, Khadija bint Khuwaylid.

KHADIJA BINT KHUWAYLID

Khadija bint Khuwaylid is a respected Qurayshi business woman. She employs people to assist her in her business enterprises. Her mother, a member of the Amir ibn Luayy ibn Ghalib Clan and a distant relative of Muhammad, had died in 575 CE. Her father, Khuwaylid, had been the grandson of Asad. Asad had been the grandson of Qusayy. Khuwaylid had commanded in the Sacrilegious War a considerable section of Quraysh, and so did his nephew Uthman. He died in 585. Khadija had inherited great wealth from her father. She, then, is able to successfully manage her father's business interests and preserve her inherited family fortune. To the blessing of affluence, she added the more important endowments of discretion, virtue, and an affectionate heart.

HISTORY

Khadija bint Khuwaylid had been married Hind ibn al-Nabbash ibn Zurara of Tamim, known as Abu His father is a noble among his people. He settles in Makkah and forms an alliance there with the Abd al-Dar ibn Qusayy Clan. The Quraysh used to marry their allies.

Khadija bore Abu Hala a son called Hind and a son called Hala.

Then after the death of Abu Hala, she marries Atiq ibn Abid of the Makhzum Clan. She bears him a girl called Hind who marries her cousin, Sayfi ibn Umayya ibn Abid of Makhzum. She gives birth to a boy named Muhammad.

This clan is called " Muhammad's tribe" because of the position of Khadija. It exists in Madinah but eventually dies out. Khadija is called Umm Hind.

Mughira ibn Abd al-Rahman al-Asadi relates that his people said that they ask Hakim ibn Hizam which of them is older—the Messenger of God or Khadija? He said that Khadija is fifteen years older than him.

Ibn Abbas relates that the women of the people of Makkah met for a festival which they held in the month of Rajab. Nothing is more important to them than attending that festival. While they are in retreat with an idol, something in the shape of man appears to them, came up to them, and then calls out in his loudest voice to the women of Taym that a Messenger would appear in their land who would be called Ahmad. He would be sent with the message of God. Any woman who was able to be his wife should do so. The women threw stones at him. They denounced him and were harsh toward him. Khadija ignored what he said but did not treat him as the other women did.[38]

Every Qurashi nobleman desires to marry Khadija. Among the on mentioned are Uqbah ibn Abu Muit, Abu Jahl and Abu Sufyan. She refuses all of them. It is said that when the Quraysh's trade caravans gather to leave for either Syria during the summer or to Yemen during the winter, Khadija's caravan equals the caravans of all other traders of Quraysh put together.

Muhammad's Second Journey to Syria

Muhammad Accompanies a Syrian Caravan in Charge of Khadija's Venture

When the proposal was made, Muhammad's generous soul at once felt the necessity of doing all that was possible to relieve his uncle. He cheerfully responded to the call. The story is as follows:[39]

History

When his nephew was now twenty-five years of age, Abu Talib addressed him with these words: I am, as you know, a man of small substance. Truly the times deal hard with me. Now here is a caravan of your own tribe about to start for Syria, and Khadija, daughter of

> Khawaylid, needs men of our tribe to send forth with her merchandise. If you were to offer yourself, she would readily accept your services. Muhammad replied: Be it so as you have said. Then Abu Talib went to Khadija, and inquired whether she wished to hire his nephew, but he added: We hear that you have engaged such a one for two camels, and we should not be content that my nephew's hire were less than four. Khadija discreetly answered: Had you asked this thing for one of a distant or alien tribe, I would have granted it; how much rather now that you ask it for a near relative and friend! So the matter was settled, and Muhammad prepared for the journey. Muhammad accepts the proposal, and on the 16th of Dhu Hijjah, BH 27/595 CE, the two set forth until they came to Syria.[40]

When the caravan is about to set out, his uncle commends him to the men of the company. Maysara, servant of Khadija, likewise travels along with Muhammad in charge of her property.

THE CARAVAN REACHES BUSRA

The caravan takes the usual route to Syria, the same which Muhammad had traveled with his uncle thirteen years before. In due time they reach Busra, on the road to Damascus, about sixty miles to the east of the Jordan.

HISTORY

> Muhammad stopped in the shade of a tree near a monk's cell, when the monk came up to Maysara and asked who the man was who was resting beneath the tree. He told him that he was of the Quraysh, the people who held the sanctuary. The monk exclaimed: None but a prophet ever sat beneath this tree.[41]

The transactions of that busy mart, where the practiced merchants of Syria seek to overreach the simple Arabs, are ill suited to the tastes and habits of Muhammad, yet his natural sagacity and shrewdness carry him prosperously through the undertaking. He returns from the barter with a balance more than usually in his favor. It is said that at the height of noon when the heat was intense as he rode his beast, Maysara saw two angels shading the Prophet from the sun's rays.[42]

RETURNING, MUHAMMAD REPORTS TO KHADIJA

When Muhammad disposes of the merchandise and, according to her command, purchases for Khadija such things as she had need of, he retraces his steps in company with the caravan to his native valley. The mildness of his manners and kind attention has won the heart of Maysara and, as they draw near to Makkah, the grateful servant persuades Muhammad to go in advance of the rest, and bear to Khadija first tidings of the successful traffic.

Khadija was sitting in the upper storey of her house,[43] on the watch for the earliest glimpse of the caravan, when she sees a camel rapidly advance from an expected quarter. As it approachs, she perceived that Muhammad is the rider. He enters, recounts the prosperous issue of the adventure, and enumerates the various goods that she had asked for. She is delighted at all she hears. There is a charm in the dark and pensive eye, in the noble features, and the graceful form of her assiduous agent as he stands before her, which pleases her even more than her good fortune.

KHADIJA SENDS TO NEGOTIATE MARRIAGE WITH MUHAMMAD

A sister (according to other accounts, a servant) is the agent deputed to sound his views. What is it, O Muhammad, she says, adroitly referring to the unusual circumstance of his being unmarried at his age, what is it that hinders you from marriage? I have nothing, replied he, in my hands wherewithal I might marry. But if haply that difficulty were removed, and you were invited to espouse a beautiful and wealthy lady of noble birth, who would place you in affluence, would you not desire to have her? And who, said Muhammad, startled at the novel thought, might that be? It is Khadija. But how can I attain unto her? Let me worry abou that, returned the female. The mind of Muhammad was at once made up, and he answers: I am ready. The female departs and tells Khadija.

MARRIAGE TO KHADIJA

When a marriage proposal is made to Muhammad on behalf of Khadija, Muhammad speaks to Abu Talib and asks for his opinion. Abu Talib regards the proposal as being very auspicious. Muhammad tells his other uncles of Khadija's proposal as well. His uncle, Hamza ibn Abd al-Muttalib, goes with him to Khuwaylid ibn Asad and asks for Khadija's hand and he marries her.

He describes his nephew's character for those present at the marriage ceremony: No matter with whom among the Quraysh you compare Muhammad, Muhammad is superior to any one of them. Even though he does not have much wealth, he is genuine, sincere and trustworthy. These qualities will remain, while wealth is never lasting.

Hakim bin Hizam then offers Khadija bint Khuwaylid, the wife of Muhammad, to choose any slave for herself. She chooses Zayd, who is then sent to her household. On the occasion of her marriage to Muhammad, Muhammad sets free his slave, Barakat (Umm Ayman). Barakat had been a servant woman who had been owned by the late father of Muhammad, Abd Allah bin Abd al-Muttalib. After the passing away of his father, this slave Barakat, had come into the custody of Muhammad. He often referred to her (Barakat) as his mother (*ummi*) in later days. Also on the occasion of marriage, Khadija had given Zayd as a gift to her new husband.

THE UNION FORTUNATE AND HAPPY

Upon him the marriage confers a faithful and affectionate companion and is not a not unfruitful wife. Khadija, on her part, fully appreciates the noble genius and commanding mind of Muhammad, which his reserved and contemplative habit, while it veils from others, could not conceal from her. Her house was thenceforward his home, and her bosom the safe receptacle of those doubts and longings after spiritual light which began to agitate his soul.

PERSON OF MUHAMMAD DESCRIBED

No description of Muhammad at this period has been attempted by tradtionalists.[44] But from the copious accounts of his person in later life, an approximate outline may be traced of his appearance in the prime of manhood. Slightly above the middle size, his figure though spare was handsome and commanding; the chest broad and open; the bones and framework large, and the joints well knit together. His neck was long and finely molded. His head, unusually large, gave space for a broad and noble brow. The hair, thick, jet black, and slightly curling, fell down over his ears. The eyebrows were arched and joined. The countenance thin, but ruddy. His large eyes, intensely black and piercing, received additional lustre from eyelashes long and dark. The nose was high and slightly aquiline, but fine, and at the end attenuated. The teeth were far apart. A long black bushy beard, reaching to the breast, added manliness and presence. His expression was pensive and contemplative. The face beamed with intelligence, though something of the sensuous might also be discerned. The skin was clear and soft; the only hair that met the eye was a fine thin line which ran down from the neck towards the navel. His broad back leaned slightly forward as he walked and his step was hasty, yet sharp and decided, like that of one rapidly descending a declivity.[45]

His Manner and Conversations

When he turned towards you, it is never partially, but with the whole body. Taciturn and reserved, Muhammad was sorrowful in temperament, continually meditating. He had no rest. He never spoke except from necessity. He used to be long silent. He expressed himself in pregnant sentences, using neither too few nor too many words. He was yet in company distinguished by a graceful urbanity. His words were pregnant and laconic, but when it pleased him to unbend, his speech was often humorous and sometimes pungent. At such seasons he entered with zest into the diversion of the moment, and now and then would laugh immoderately. But in general he listened to the conversation rather than joined in it.

His Emotions Under Control and Treatment of Friends and Enemies

He was the subject of strong passions, but they were so controlle by reason and discretion, that they rarely appeared upon the surface. H was generous and considerate towards his friends.

Latent Force of Will

Behind his quiet retiring exterior lay hid a high resolve, a singleness of purpose, a strength and fixedness of will, a sublime determination, destined to achieve the marvelous work of bowing towards himself the heart of all Arabia as the heart of one man. Khadija was the first to perceive the noble and commanding qualities of her husband, and with a child-like confidence surrendered to him her soul, her will, and faith.

History

> Khadija tells Waraqa ibn Nawfal ibn Asad ibn Abd al-Uzza, who is her cousin and a Christian who has studied the scriptures and is a scholar, what her servant Maysara had told her that the monk had said and how he had seen the two angels shading him. He says: If this is true, Khadija, verily Muhammad is the Prophet of this people. I know that a Prophet of this people is to be expected. His time has come, or words to that effect. Waraqa is finding the time of waiting wearisome and used to say: How long?[46]

Rebuilding the Kabah (605 CE)

The first incident which interrupts the even tenor of his married life is the rebuilding of the Kabah, when he is about thirty-five years of age.[47]

One of those violent floods which at times sweep down the valley, had shattered the Kabah. Its walls showed ominous rents, and they feared lest it should fall. The treasury is also insecure, owing to the absence of a roof and thieves had lately clambered over and stolen some of the precious relics. These are recovered, but it was resolved that similar danger should for the future be avoided by raising the walls and covering the roof. While the Quraysh deliberate how this might best be done, a Grecian ship is driven by stress of weather not far off upon the Red Sea shore. The news reaching Makkah, the aged chief, al-Walid, accompanied by a body of the Quraysh, proceed to the wreck, purchase the timber of the broken ship, and engage her captain, a Greek, by name Bakum, skilled in architecture, to assist in the reconstruction of the Kabah.[47] The several tribes of the Quraysh are divided into four bodies. To each is assigned the charge of one side. With such mysterious reverence is the Kabah regarded, that apprehensions are entertained lest the apparent sacrilege of dismantling the walls should expose even the pious restorers to divine wrath. At last Al-Walid seizes a pickaxe, and, invoking the Deity in a deprecatory prayer, detaches and throws down a portion of the wall. They then retire and wait until the morning, when, finding that no mischief has befallen the adventurous chief, all join in the demolition. They continue to dig until they reach a hard foundation of green stones which resists the pickaxe stroke.[48]

THE BLACK STONE

They begin to build the wall using that wood. Stones of grey granite from the neighboring hills are carried by the citizens upon their heads to the sacred enclosure. The whole body of Quraysh assisted in the work, and all proceeded harmoniously until the structure rose four or five feet above the surface. At that stage it becomes necessary to build the Black Stone into the eastern corner, with its surface so exposed as readily to be kissed by pilgrims upon foot. This stone, which is semicircular, measures some six inches in height and eight in breadth. It is of a reddish-black color.

RIVALRY FOR PLACING THE BLACK STONES

The virtue of the edifice depending on this mysterious stone, each family of the Quraysh advances pretensions to the exclusive right of placing it in its future receptacle. The contention becomes hot, and it is feared that bloodshed would ensue. For four or five days the building is suspended. At last the Quraysh again assemble on the spot amicably to decide the difficulty. Then the oldest citizen stands and says: O Quraysh, listen to me! My advice is that the man who chance first to enter the court of the Kabah by yonder gate, he shall be chosen either to decide the difference amongst you, or himself to place the stone. The proposal is confirmed by acclamation, and they await the issue. Muhammad, who has at the moment is observed approaching, is the first to enter. Seeing him they all exclaim: Here comes the Trustworthy Arbiter. We are content to abide by his decision. Calm and self-possessed, Muhammad receives the commission and at once resolves upon an expedient which should conciliate them all. Taking off his mantle and spreading it upon the ground, he places the stone thereon, and says: Now let one from each of your four divisions come forward, and raise a corner of this mantle. Four chiefs approach, and holding each a corner lift thus the stone. When it reaches the proper height, Muhammad, with his own hand, guide it to its place. The decision raises the character of Muhammad for wisdom and judgment while the singular and providential call.

THE KABAH FINISHED

The stone thus deposited in its proper place, the Quraysh build on without interruption. When the walls had risen to a considerable height they roof them over with fifteen rafters resting upon six central pillars A covering of cloth, thrown across the temple according to ancient custom, hung like a curtain round on every side.[49] The Kabah thus rebuilt is surrounded by a small enclosure, probably of not more than fifty yards in diameter. To the west stands the Hall of Council, with its door towards the Kabah. On the east is the gateway of the Shayba clan, close by the sacred well Zamzam. At a respectful distance are built all round the houses of the Quraysh. The great idol Hubal is placed in the center of the Kabah. Outside are ranged various other images. The door for entering the Kabah is then near the Black Stone on the eastern side, and several feet above the ground—a fact attributed by Muhammad to the pride of the Quraysh, and desire to retain in their own hands the power of admission. The building, though now substantial and secure, occupies somewhat less space than its dilapidated and roofless predecessor. The excluded area lay to the north-west, and is still without the sacred walls.[50] The Kabah, as it now stands, is an irregular cube, the sides of which vary from forty to fifty feet in length. The quadrangle, or court, corresponds loosely with the direction of its walls.

ABSENCE OF ANY PARAMOUNT AUTHORITY

The circumstances which gave occasion for the decision of Muhammad strikingly illustrate the absence of any paramount authority in Makkah, and the number of persons among whom the power of government is at this time divided. Each main branch of the Qurayshite stock is independent of the other. The offices of state and religion created by Qusayy with the view of securing undisputed command had, from their distribution among several independent families, lost their potency. It is a period in which the genius of a Qusayy might have again dispensed with the prestige of place and birth, and asserted dominion by strength of will and inflexibility of purpose. But no such leader appears, and the divided aristocracy move on with feeble and distracted step.

UTHMAN IBN AL-HUWAYARITH ATTEMPTS TO SEIZE THE GOVERNMENT

A curious story is related of an attempt made about this period to gain the rule at Makkah. The aspirant is Uthman, nephew of Khadija's father. He is dissatisfied with the idolatrous system of Makkah and travels to the court of the Roman Emperor, where he is honorably entertained, and baptized.[51] Returning to Makkah, he lays claim, on the strength of an imperial grant, to the government of the city. But his claim is rejected, and he flees to Syria, where he found a refuge with the Ghassanid prince. He there revenge himself by using his influence for the imprison ment of the Qurayshite merchants who chance to be at the Syrian court. But emissaries from Makkah, by offering gifts, counteracted his authority with the prince, and at last procure his death.

COMMERCE FLOURISHED AT MAKKAH

Notwithstanding the absence of a strong government, Makkah continues to flourish under the generally harmonious combination of the several independent patriarchs. Commerce is carried towards Syria and Iran with greater vigor than ever. About the year 606 CE we read of a mercantile expedition under Abu Sufyan, which, for the first time, penetrates to the capital of Persia, and reaches even the presence of the Chosroes.

MUHAMMAD'S FAMILY GROWS

Within the next ten or twelve years (595-607 CE), Khadija bore to Muhammad two sons and four daughters. The first born was named Qasim and, after him, according to Arabian custom, Muhammad received the title of Abu Qasim, the father of Qasim. This son died at the age of two years. Meanwhile, his eldest daughter Zaynab was born. After her, at intervals of one or two years, three other daughters, Ruqiyya, Umm Kulthum and Fatima. Last of all was born his second son, who died in infancy.

Salma, maid of Safiyya, Muhammad's aunt, officiated as midwife on these occasions. Khadija sacrificed at the birth of each boy two kid goats, and one at the birth of every girl. Her children she nursed herself. Many years after, Muhammad used to look back to this period of his life with fond remembrance. Indeed so much did he dwell upon the mutual love of Khadija and himself that Ayisha was later to declare herself more jealous of this rival whom she had never seen, than of all the other wives to contested with her for the affection of the Prophet.

QASIM IBN MUHAMMAD

Qasim is their first child. He is born in Makkah before the beginning of the Prophet's mission and dies at the age of two. Muhammad is sometimes called Abu al-Qasim, "the father of Qasim."

ZAYNAB BINT MUHAMMAD IBN ABD ALLAH

Zaynab bint Muhammad is the oldest daughter of the Messenger o. God said to have been born in ca. 598 CE when the Prophet was twenty-seven years old. She accepts the Quranic message when her mother does.

RUQAYYA BINT MUHAMMAD IBN ABD ALLAH

Ruqayya, said to be born three years after her sister, Zaynab, in ca. 601 CE. She accepts the Quranic message when her mother does.

UMM KULTHUM BINT MUHAMMAD IBN ABD ALLAH

Umm Khulthum is born a year after her sister, Ruqayya. She accepts the Quranic message when her mother does.

ALI IBN ABU TALIB (599-661 CE)

Ali is born in 599 CE. When he is six years old in 605 CE, he moves to the home of Muhammad and Khadija where he grows up. He is placed in the care of Muhammad and Khadija because a of a famine in Makkah.

MUHAMMAD BECOMES THE GUARDIAN OF HIS COUSIN ALI

Shortly after the rebuilding of the Kabah, Muhammad comforts himself for the loss of his infant son Qasim by becoming the guardian of Ali, his first cousin, the child of his uncle, Abu Talib.[52] It fell out thus: a season of severe scarcity visited Makkah and Abu Talib, still poor, was put to shifts for the support of his numerous family. His difficulties were perceived by Muhammad, who, prompted by his usual kindness and consideration, repaired to his rich uncle Abbas, and said: O Abbas! Your brother, Abu Talib, has a burdensome family, and you see what straits men are brought to. Let us go to him and relieve him somewhat of the care of his children. I will take one son, if you will take another. And we shall support them. Abbas consenting, they proposed the thing to Abu Talib. He replied: Leave me Akil and Talib and do you with the others as it pleases you. So Muhammad took Ali, and Abbas took Jafar.

ZAYD IBN HARITHA, ADOPTED SON OF MUHAMMAD

Sold into slavery at an early age, he is bought by a nephew of Khadija, the wife of the Messenger of God. She gives him to Muhammad in 595 CE before the revelation begins at the time of their marriage. Zayd is treated with such kindness and love that when his own father comes to get him, although Muhammad tells him that he is free to return to his home with his father, Zayd prefers to remain with Muhammad and Khadija. Once Zayd made this decision, Muhammad took him straightway to the Black Stone of the Kabah and said: Bear testimony, all you that are present. Zayd is my son. I will be his heir, and he shall be mine.

FATIMA BINT MUHAMMAD IBN ABD ALLAH

The youngest daughter of the Messenger of God, Fatima is born some say five years before the Messenger began his mission and some say five years after the mission began. Whichever one it is, it has been recorded that her early years are spent bearing the suffering and difficulties of her father with a very special sympathy. For those who say she is born five years before the revelation, they say that she accepts the Quranic message at the same time as her mother and sisters.

ABD ALLAH

Abd Allah is born after the call to prophethood. He dies while still young.

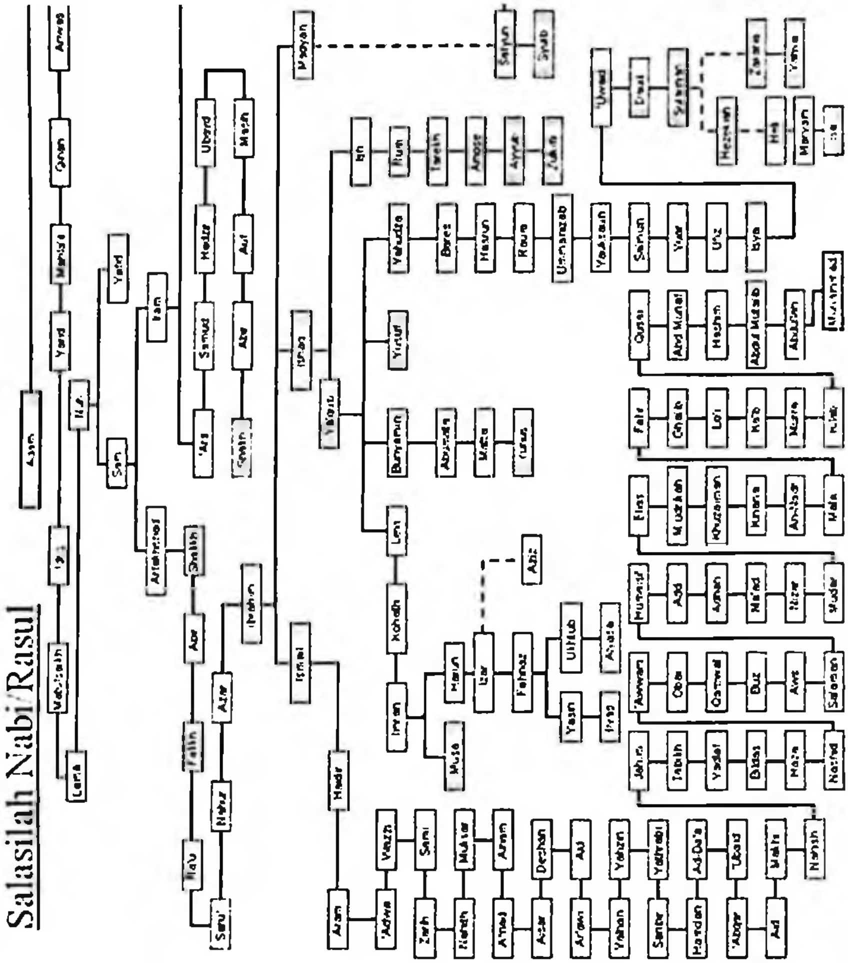
BARAKAT

Born of Abyssinian parents, Barakat (Umm Ayman) is sold into slavery in Makkah like so many whose names we do not even know. As her name Barakat indicates, she is among the most blessed because she is bought and freed by Abd Allah ibn Abd al-Muttalib and taken to his home to help his wife, Amina. She is to become one of the women who raised God's Messenger. She accepts the Quranic message when the other members of his family do.

MARRIAGE OF THREE ELDEST DAUGHTERS

The sister of Khadija is married to al-Rabi, a descendant of Abd al-Shams, and has borne him a son called Abu al-Aas who, in course of time has grown up, and is respected for his uprightness and mercantile success. Khadija loves her nephew, and looks upon him as her own son. She prevails upon Muhammad to join him in marriage with their eldest daughter, Zaynab, who had but just reached the age of womanhood. The union proved to be one of real affection, though during the troubled rise of the Quranic message it was checquered, as we shall see, by temporary severance, and by several incidents. Somewhat later the two younger daughters, Ruqiyya and Umm Kulthum, are to be given in marriage to Utba and Utayba, sons of Abu Lahab, uncle of Muhammad, but these marriages are never consumated and dissolved when the revelation begins.[53] Fatima, the youngest, was yet a child. By Muhammad's desire Zayd marries Muhammad's attendant, Umm Ayman (Barakat). Though nearly double his age, she bears him a son called Usama, who is the leader in the expedition to Syria at the time of Muhammad's fatal illness.[54]

APPENDIX 1: GENEALOGY OF THE MESSENGER FROM THE PROPHETS OF MONOTHEISM


Salasilah Nabi/Rasul
Adam
Anwas
Qinan
Yard
Idris
Matusalah
Nuh
Yafit
Sam
Ham
Arfakhsyad
Syalikh
Abir
Falikh
Ra'u
Saru'
Nahur
Azar
Ibrahim
Ismail
Ishaq
Madyan
Syu'aib
Ubaid
Samud
Masih
Auf
'Ad
Ya'qub
Yusuf
Yahudza
Bunyamin
Lewi
Imran
Musa
Harun
Fahnaz
Yasin
Ilyas
Alyasa
Daud
Sulaiman
Zakaria
Yahya
Maryam
Isa
Hadir
'Adnan
Ma'ad
Nizar
Mudar
Ilyas
Mudrikah
Khuzaimah
Kinanah
Malik
Fahr
Ghalib
Lu'ai
Ka'ab
Murrah
Kilab
Qusai
Abd Manaf
Hashim
Abdul Mutalib
Abdullah
Muhammad

NOTES TO THE TEXT

1. Francis E. Peters, *Muhammad and the Origins of Islam*, SUNY Press, 1994, p 109.

2. Ibn Ishaq, *Life of Muhammad*, pp 87-88.

3. Ibn Ishaq, *Life of Muhammad*, pp 87-88.

4. Ibn Ishaq, *Life of Muhammad*, pp 87-88.

5. Ibn Ishaq, *Life of Muhammad*, pp 87-88.

6. Ibn Ishaq, *Life of Muhammad*, pp 87-88; 7:29 ff is revealed about them.

7. *Taj al-Arus*

8. *Muhit al-Muhit*, I, 443-444.

9. See Ibn Ishaq, *Life of Muhammad*, II, 603.

10. Toshiko Izutsu, *Structure of Ethical Terms*, p 27.

11. Izutsu, *Structure of Ethical Terms*, p 29.

12. Izutsu, *Structure of Ethical Terms*, p 29.

13. Ibn Qutayba, p 28.

14. Tabari, *The History of al-Tabari*, i, 1772.

15. Tabari, *The History of al-Tabari*, i. 1772. He dies in Abyssinia. After the migration of Muhammad to Madinah, the Messenger marries Ubayd Allah's widow, Umm Habiba, daughter of Abu Sufyan.

16. Hisham ibn Urwa from his father on the authority of his mother Asma bint Abu Bakr said that she saw him.

17. Ibn Ishaq, *Life of Muhammad*, pp 98-100.

18. See Appendix 1 for a chart of the names.

19. Ibn Ishaq, *Life of Muhammad*, pp 41 ff.

20. Ibn Ishaq, *Life of Muhammad*, pp 56-57.

21. Yazid ibn Abu Habib al-Misri from Marthad ibn Abd Allah al-Yazani from Abd Allah ibn Zurayr al-Ghafiqi told me that he heard Ali ibn Abi Talib telling the story of Zamzam. Ibn Ishaq, *Life of Muhammad*, p 45; pp 62-64)

22. Ibn Ishaq, *Life of Muhammad*, pp 4-18.

23. Ibn Hisham, p 109; Tabari, i. 1078; Ibn Saad, p 58. Abd Allah, or Servant of God, was a name common among the pre-Quranic Arabs.

24. Tabari, i. 1081.

25. That is to say, not reared at home, and, therefore, of an inferior kind.

26. Ibn Ishaq, *Life of Muhammad*, pp 70-71.

27. Ibn Hisham, p. 107; Ibn Saad, p. 73.

28. Ibn Ishaq, *Life of Muhammad*, pp 73-76.

29. Ibn Hisham, p. 108; Tabari, i. 1123; Ibn Saad, p. 74.

30. Ibn Hisham, p 1 I 5; Tabari, i. 1124; Ibn Saad, p 75.

31. Ibn Ishaq, *Life of Muhammad*, pp 79-81.

32. Ibn Ishaq, *Life of Muhammad*, p 71.

33. Later chapters will show the significance of this Fair in the life of the Prophet.

34 Harb was the son of Umayr and father of Muhammad's opponent Abu Sufyan. As confederate of the murderer he was bound to take up his cause.

35 The Traditions differ as to the role played by Muhammad..

36. Ibn Hisham, p. 85; Ibn Saad, p. 86.

37. Ibn Ishaq, *Life of Muhammad*, p 86.

38. Ibn Ishaq, *Life of Muhammad,* p 86.

39. Ibn Hisham, p. 119; Tabari, i. 1127; Ibn Saad, p. 82.

40. Ibn Ishaq, *Life of Muhammad,* p 82.

41. Ibn Ishaq, *Life of Muhammad,* p 82.

42. Thus Nestor, seeing Muhammad as he sat under a tree below which none ever sat but a Prophet, immediately embraced him as such.

43. Her house was a little to the north-east of the Kabah. It is called the birth place of Fatima.

44. Cf. Ibn Hisham, p 266.

45. Some say he walked like a man ascending a hill; others as if he were wrenching his foot from a stone. These descriptions imply decision of step. The hollows of his hands and feet were more than usually filled and level: a feature regarded by Orientals with interest.

46. Ibn Ishaq, *Life of Muhammad,* p 82.

47. Ibn Saad, p 93. Ibn Hisham does not mention the captain, and says a Copt carpenter rebuilt the House. Tabari, i. II 35.

48. Ibn Hisham, p 122; Tabari, i. 1 138; Ibn Saad, p 93.

49. The custom of veiling the Kabah is of extremely remote date. Originally the cloth covered the whole building, including the top. Before a roof was built by the Quraysh it must have constituted the only protection from the weather. The curtain is now attached only to the walls. The covering in those days was of Yemen cloth. Umar renewed it yearly of Egyptian linen. Various materials, as striped Yemen stuff, red brocade, or black silk, have been at different times used. It has been changed as often as six times a year. To supply the curtain came to be regarded as a sign of sovereignty. It is now worked at Cairo, and renewed yearly at the season of pilgrimage. It is a coarse tissue of silk and cotton mixed. A band of two feet, embroidered with texts, is inserted about a third from the top. It was of a brilliant black (says Burton), and the *hizam*—the zone or golden band running round the upper portion of the building —as well as the *burka* (face veil) were of dazzling brightness. The *burka* is the gold embroidered curtain covering the Kabah door. Muir, Vol. iii. p 295.

50. The sill of the door is about seven feet above the level of the ground, and a movable wooden staircase is used for ascending. It is distant six feet from the corner of the Black Stone. After the conquest of Makkah, Muhammad is related to have said: Truly, they have drawn back the foundations of the Kabah from their original limit and if it were not that the inhabitants are fresh from idolatry, I would have restored to the building that which was excluded from the area thereof. But in case the people may again after my time need to renew the structure, come, and I will show you what was left out.' So he showed a space in the or excluded area of about seven yards. This space at present lies to the north-west of the Kabah, about the distance pointed out by Muhammad as the limit of the old building. It is now marked by a semicircular parapet of white marble, five feet high, facing the Kabah, and is still regarded as equally holy with the temple itself. Uthman A.H. 26, and ibn al-Zubayr, A.H. 64, enlarged the square by purchasing and removing the adjoining houses of the Quraysh, and enclosed it by a wall. Various similar changes and improvements were made by successive Caliphs until, in the third century of the Hijra, the quadrangle with its imposing colonnade assumed its present dimensions. Muir, ibid.

51. Ibn Hisham, p 143.

52. Tabari, i. I 163.

53. When the Messenger of God was sent and God sent down, 'Perish the hands of Abu Lahab,' (111) Abu Lahab said to his sons that they must not marry the daughters of the Messenger.

54. Ibn Hisham, p 143.

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